

**THE REALITIES OF LIFE FROM A  
HINDU SINDI PERSPECTIVE**

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## ABSTRACT

I undertook the research for this thesis and am alone responsible for its composition.

John N. Young



## ABSTRACT

Before the partitioning of India in 1947, the Kori, a Koli caste who migrated from Gujarat at the turn of the century, were accorded low status by Sind's Muslims and Hindus alike. Their occupation as land-less labourers and their semi-nomadic lifestyle reinforced their designation as "Scheduled Caste". When the higher caste Hindus fled Sind after Partition, the situation changed. The majority of Kori remained behind. Their aspirations to higher status benefitted from the departure of the higher caste Hindus, allowing them to engineer their rise on the ladder of caste at the expense of the other Scheduled Caste Hindu groups. The reality of absolute Muslim dominance has prevented this from having any real impact upon the Koris' relative political and economic position, however. They remain a powerless minority group, high caste in theory but not in practice, for their Hindu ideals are not shared by the Muslim majority.

This situation of the Kori has obviously had some impact upon their perceptions of reality. While they see themselves as Hindu, they are aware of the scorn of their dominant landlords and neighbours whom they, in turn, despise for being Muslims. It is interesting that, in this social climate, many Kori beliefs and practices have altered over the years to take up a course parallel to those of the Muslims. While the outsider might see this as an attempt to gain respectability, this is something the Kori have to deny, for to acknowledge it would be to acknowledge the inferiority of Hinduism to Islam.

This thesis is a study of the beliefs and certainties expressed by a minority group in a society dominated by a majority which does not share its total ethos. It is also an attempt to come to terms with the problems posed for the ethnographer, whose task it is to distinguish between what, to those studied, might be belief, fact, or opinion, and what, if related to the situation in which they arose, might merely be expressions of collective justification.

## PREFACE

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I. The Realities of Life - Kori with a Sindi



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the Kori people of Southern Sind, and of the way the society of which they are a part influences their perceptions of reality. Our aims are two-fold: to present Kori perceptions in a manner which is useful to the social anthropologist, and to explore how they are influenced by Sindi society. This introductory chapter, although mainly a discussion of method, will set out the main premises upon which the following study is based.

### SECTION 1.1: EXPRESSION OF MEANING

#### I. The Problem of "Belief"

It is necessary to begin by defining what is meant by the phrase "perceptions of reality". This is not to be seen as a substitute for "religion" or even "religious belief". We would agree with Pocock (1973:preface) when he argues that the perceptions categorised within the concept of religion, as it is used in the English language, are too limited for the term to be applied to the world of the Hindu, which is not compartmentalised in such a manner.

Use of the term "belief" runs into similar difficulties. The term itself came under scrutiny in the early seventies, when Needham published his work, "Belief, Language, and Experience" (1972), and, since then, has never fully recovered its former status in the language of the social anthropologist. Needham's challenge to its use was two-fold. Firstly, he stated that not all languages possess an equivalent for the English word "belief".

When a language provides no equivalent to "belief", there is no belief; and since it is readily discoverable that many languages make in fact no such provision, it follows that belief is not a conceptual capacity common to all men (ibid:200).

Needham's second point was that "belief" had no agreed definition, even in the English language.

At this point in our research for the real grounds of the concept of belief, we have thus, in another direction, approached the limits of language, and nowhere yet have we touched firm foundations, or got any reliable bearings. With each step in the analysis, on the contrary, infirmities and obscurities have proliferated, and in nothing have we found any certainty - not in language, not in experience (ibid:243).

Faced with this challenge we must examine what is meant if we use the phrase "Kori beliefs". Here we must look more closely at the points Needham has made, and if we do, we find that "infirmities and obscurities" proliferate when he treats belief as a concept isolated from the context in which it is used.

Three examples will illustrate this point. If we wish to state a fact, we can do so by saying "This is so". This indicates that what is stated is perceived to be an undeniable truth. If we wish to state an opinion, we can say "It is my opinion", or "I think that this is so". This indicates that there are perceived to be viable alternatives to the point of view we are expressing. If we wish to state what we perceive to be fact, but which we know is not acceptable as an undeniable truth by all people on logical (or economic, or political) grounds, which we nevertheless deem to be unsound, then we can do so by saying "We believe that this is so". Here the use of the word "belief" acknowledges the possibility of alternative points of view, while at the same time undermining their validity

The differences in the meanings of the words "fact", "belief", and "opinion" lies in the implications of their use, and they cannot be defined outside their context, (just as the meaning of a piece of wrapping paper would be lost if the paper were studied and its function ignored). Needham's confessed inability to define "belief" in isolation indicates a failure to grasp its significance in the English language.

The implications of the word "belief", however, are further complicated when it is used to describe others. The phrase "They believe this is so", where this belief is not shared by the person making the statement, qualifies what "they" might perceive to be either fact, belief, or opinion. The problem created by the use of the word "belief", then, is not that

it has no definition, but that it can be so easily misused. If we use the phrase "Kori beliefs", we should only be doing so from their point of view, referring only to what they would see as belief, if, that is, we accept that they have such a concept.

This brings us back to Needham's first point, that when a language lacks an equivalent for "belief" then those who speak it have no such concept. If we accept that built into the structure of all languages is the ability to state facts, then, going by the usage of the word "belief" discussed above, the absence of an equivalent term might indicate an unwillingness to consider alternative points of view, (something which the word "belief" allows and the word "opinion" openly permits). But we have seen that the word "belief" itself cannot be defined outside its context of use, and so, if we wish to seek an equivalent in another language, we must first be aware of what "belief" is used to refer to in the English language.

This issue is not new to social anthropology. Horton (1964:153) makes the distinction between the rationality of "closed" and "open" predicaments. The former he sees as the African traditional approach to information, the latter being the approach of the Western scientist.

in traditional cultures there is no developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of theoretical tenets. (ibid)

In these circumstances, the established tenets invest the believer with a compelling force. It is this force which we refer to when we talk of such tenets as sacred (ibid).

This lack of willingness to consider alternatives in African traditional thought would appear to indicate to us that they have no need of the concept of "belief". Horton goes on to stress the traditional thinkers' inability to escape the constraints of what is thus deemed sacred, by comparing their "mixed motives" with the "segregated motives" of the Western scientist.

Where there are powerful emotional and aesthetic loadings on a particular theoretical scheme, these must add to the difficulties of abandoning this scheme when cognitive goals press towards doing so (ibid:161).

Horton is here making the point that the individual's perceptions of reality cannot be fully understood outside the context in which they arise. This view gains support from the theories of MacIntyre (1964), who argues,

for example, that without "believing" in Christianity one can never fully understand it.

not because Christianity is invulnerable to sceptical objections, but because its peculiar invulnerability belongs to it as a form of belief which has lost the social context which once made it comprehensible (ibid:76).

MacIntyre argues that, because Christianity, as a basis for ordering reality, has been replaced by scientific reality, it is now possible to be sceptical about the former, whereas, for example, in the Middle Ages the absence of alternatives made this impossible (ibid:73).

The point must be made, however, that neither Horton or MacIntyre appear to be sceptical about scientific rationality - when they do question some of its premises they do so in the manner of clerics discussing minor points of doctrine, rather than considering viable alternatives. This, in turn, brings us back to the question of how the word "belief" is used in the English language. We see a certain bias creeping into its usage, something of which the ethnographer searching for its linguistic equivalent must be aware. Accepting MacIntyre's contention that "Western thought", in which context has arisen the discipline of social anthropology, rests on the premises of a scientific rationality, we cannot fail to notice that the English speaker generally categorises what is deemed to be scientifically proven as "fact" and this is accepted without question (i.e sacred), whereas what is unproven or unprovable is categorised as "belief".

Science also provides a rational security to the other sacred precepts which provide our society with its ideals. Dumont (1970a:5) discusses the fundamental notions of liberty and equality which underlie our ordering of reality and our structuring of social institutions. Outside this sacred realm of fact, all other perceptions of reality are merely beliefs, and whether they stand or fall, they are not allowed to shake the foundations of our social world.

It is not our intention, however, to challenge the reality of scientific humanism. Dumont has already attempted this with some success when he opposes it with hierarchy, as a concept central to Hindu thought (Ibid:Preface to the French Edition). We have hopefully, however, demonstrated what the word "belief" is used to refer to in the English

language: that which is unproven or unprovable, and which lies outside our societies "sacred" premises of scientific humanism. This usage poses problems in our search for a meaningful equivalent in other languages. What we might refer to as "beliefs" might be what the speakers of the other language consider to be (sacred) facts, and therefore would not describe as beliefs at all, just as we ourselves would be disinclined to refer to what, to us, is a scientific fact, as a belief.

The danger exists that our prejudice of what we consider to be beliefs constrains our search for a meaningful equivalent in another language. All languages must contain structures which allow for viable alternatives, for without the latter there can be no objective thought, and objectivity is a necessary condition for human existence, being the basis of any decision-making process. What is of relevance in our search for the equivalent of "belief", is what it is that people are willing to be objective about.

## II. The Problem of Access

So far the discussion has drawn attention to three categories into which the Korj might themselves place their perceptions of reality: fact, belief, and opinion. As these perceptions, especially where they differ from our own, are to be the basis of this study, then it is important that we are able to distinguish between these categories in the views expressed by the Korj. Not only would this enhance our understanding of how the Korj view the world, it would also enable us to perceive the interplay of knowledge between each category. While we would agree with Ursula Sharma's view that "intellectual conformity is not a matter of great importance to the Hindu villager" (1978:43), we would argue that the villager finds intellectual conformity more important in some areas than in others. This raises problems of method which must now be considered.

Similar to MacIntyre's concept of "belief's" social context (1964), is Bourdieu's concept of "habitus".

The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of double dispositions, in the organisms lastingly



subjected to the same conditionings and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence (1977:85).

Habitus is seen to be the context in which thought and action take place. It is an ever changing context, continually absorbing new situations resulting from the interplay of thought and practice, and continually developing its own framework of tradition to contain any challenge which may arise from this process.

Through habitus, the structure which has produced it governs practice, not by the process of mechanical determinism, but through the mediation of the orientations and limits it assigns to the habitus's operations of invention. As an acquired condition of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the habitus engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others (ibid:95).

Our exploration of Kori perception involves, as we have indicated, a study of what to them might be facts, beliefs, or opinions. The Hinduism of the Kori, as we shall see, is seen by them as a search for truth from among a variety of alternatives. This lends itself to their use of an equivalent for our word "belief" in a context similar to that of its English usage. There is "to believe", manvu (also "to follow", "to have faith in"), and "belief", vishvas. Nevertheless it is generally the situation in which views are expressed, rather than the use of such words, which indicates whether what is stated is fact, belief, or opinion.

As we have hinted in our discussion above of objectivity (1.1.i.), what is accepted without question (fact) is often least mentioned, for it is taken for granted by all who are party to the conversation - with the exception, perhaps, of the outsider. In contrast, what is not taken for granted, and might therefore be of less fundamental (sacred) importance, is often what is expressed most often (i.e. opinion).

Bourdieu highlights the problems this might pose to the ethnographer when he states that that which is taken for granted in conversation with those of shared habitus must necessarily be explained to the outsider. This may force informants to express that which they are not used to putting into words, and thus distort their statements (ibid:18).

There is no easy way around this problem, other than to be aware of it. The research for this study was conducted over twenty consecutive

months. Because of the relatively short time spent among the Kori, their perceptions had to be communicated to me in terms which I could grasp, given my position as an outsider in their society. This inevitably involved a process of questions and answers, backed by direct observation and, to a limited extent, participation in their lifestyle.

It is not just the difficulty of the outsider gaining access to the inner core of shared Kori reality which poses problems, however. The particular disposition of the Kori voicing information must also be taken into account, along with their age, status, health, wealth, and numerous other factors which might prompt them to present one view at one time and change their views a day later.

There is no sure way of distinguishing what to the Kori is fact, belief, or opinion. One has to rely on familiarity with the nature of the individual concerned, and look for a general consensus on the views they express. In presenting information in the course of this study I have attempted, as far as possible, to quote the individual Kori themselves. Where contradictory views have been expressed, I have included the contradictions. Where there has been a general consensus, I have presented the most adequate expression of it. I have also included, at a later stage in this chapter (1.3), a brief character sketch of the main individuals quoted. This, however, should be seen as a rough description of them and of their relation with each other. As the ethnographic chapters progress, it is my hope that the reader will become better acquainted with their character through reading their views on various matters.

Of course, this raises another problem of method. In using the quotes of my informants I had to rely on retaining their words in my memory until it was convenient and appropriate to write them down. Even so, my understanding of their language remained a major variable in determining the accuracy of my translations. By using direct quotes, however, my hope is that I have presented in a more explicit way the actual process of language acquisition undergone by any ethnographer in the field. Once familiarity with a concept has been acquired, then it is no longer important to note its repetitions, unless they refute, or cast further light upon, its meaning. Our period of fieldwork began in October 1980. (Prior to then I had spent seven months in Sirah in the summers of 1977 and 1978 undertaking research into Kori kinship and marriage.) It was six

months before my confidence in my language ability enabled me to record the quotes of my informants. As well as indicating who spoke the words, I have dated each quote so as to give the reader a rough scale with which to judge my own language ability at that time. Even so, unless the context demanded it, I did not translate what was said word for word, but instead, with increasing confidence as time progressed, used the English expressions which were judged to be equivalent in meaning.

Translation is never a precise science, however (see also Pocock 1973:166), and I would stress that the ethnography presented is no more than my "opinion" of the views expressed by many different Kori individuals on matters which in some cases were much talked about, and in others were so taken for granted that speaking of them was, to them, a novel exercise in philosophy. While I was not an experienced translator, neither were most Kori experienced philosophers. And if one was, s/he was used to speaking to those who were not, and in terms which could be comprehended.

## SECTION 1.2: MEANING AND CONTEXT

So far we have been focussing on the difficulties facing the ethnographer as an outsider. There are advantages also. At the level of the Kori's own view of the world, the ethnographer can gain some access in an indirect way by drawing upon India's heritage contained in the variety of religious texts available, as well as by comparison with other ethnographic research. This is not to say that the local view should be subordinated to the wider view. Indeed, McGilvray has made a plea that ethnographers rely less on the texts and instead build up information on local ethnosemantic categories; "even local oral recensions of such textual themes as karma and dharma." (1982a:6) Good acknowledges the relevance of both.

When analysing institutions which transcend local contexts but are nonetheless partly shaped by them, one has to adopt a broad, as well as a narrow focus (1985:121).



This study makes use of both the broad and the narrow focus, but, as its essence is the Kori point of view, so the broad, when it aids our understanding, will nevertheless be subordinated to the narrow, or local. In the course of the ethnographic chapters we also would hope that McGilvray's plea for local definitions of textual themes is to some extent realised.

This study is not just to be of how the Kori perceive reality, but also of how these perceptions are influenced by the changes taking place in the wider society of which they are a part. This indicates a further level at which the ethnographer's marginal status is of possible advantage. This is where what is voiced as fact, belief or opinion, is in fact justification: i.e. it conceals rather than reveals the whole issue. Words spoken in justification by an individual may be intentional or unintentional. Nevertheless they can be identified from the views of others who share the same knowledge or situation. Views held in justification by a group are another matter altogether, for, where the exceptional individual might perceive them to be an excuse for a contradiction his group cannot come to terms with, the majority perceive them to be real; as facts or beliefs held in good faith. Perceived in such respectable terms, views which justify rather than explain are often built into the fabric of a society, embedded in its tradition.

To see beyond the misleading, and often highly emotive, barriers of justification it is sometimes necessary to escape the very social context which brought them into being. (Good examples of justification posing for fact in Scottish society are the many myths which fuel "race" hatred. The social anthropologist would be quick to look beyond these myths for the situation which allows their germination. Chapter 7 raises similar issues.) In addition to studying the expressed views of the Kori, then, we must take into account the underlying forces which might motivate them. This involves an overview of their situation.

## I. The Kori in their Historical Context

95.8 percent of Pakistan's Hindus live in Sind, where they are 6.4 percent of the total population (Government of Pakistan Assorted District Census Reports - from Addleton 1985). The Kori number themselves among

Sind's 1,200,000 Hindus. "Kori" is the term by which they refer to themselves. Other groups in Sind refer to them as "Kutchi Koli", while previous censuses classified them along with the other "Tribal" Hindus of Sind as "Scheduled Caste".

When speaking to outsiders the Kori will also use the term "Kutchi Koli" to describe themselves, thus acknowledging their shared identity with the several other Koli groups in Sind. These groups claim to have migrated from different areas in the east, their origins being reflected in their names. The Kutchi Koli came from Kutch, the Parkari Koli from Nagar Parkar, now on the Indian border, the Tharadri Koli from the desert to the east and north east, and the Vadiyara and Mayvasi Koli from the Vadiyar and Meyvas regions of Gujarat. The Kori who live in Gujarat classify themselves as Vagariya Koli, thus, perhaps, indicating more precisely their area of origin. They take pains, however, to disassociate themselves from the lower caste Vagari, whom they regard with rhetorical contempt.

Each of the Sindi Kolis are distinct groups, speaking their own dialect and their women wearing their own style of clothes. This distinctiveness is not the characteristic of that particular group, but of the area from which they originated. Laws of caste are observed between them. They do not intermarry, and they accept cooked food from each other according to hierarchical principles. To this extent they can be seen as separate "castes". (Association of caste/subcaste with area of origin is a common feature of Gujarati society, commented upon among the Brahman and Baniya "subcastes" by Das 1982:11.)

Although there are no official figures to support me, all Hindus being considered as one unit by Government Statistics, I would estimate that the Kori in Sind number roughly 50,000, and that the total number of all the Koli groups lies between 150,000 and 200,000. Outwith the Koli grouping, the main body of Hindus in Sind are Bhils. Indeed, the Bhils outnumber the Kolis. Like the Kolis the Bhils divide themselves into distinct groups according to their origins, and maintain caste distinctions among themselves.

It is not only in Sind that these two groups are found to co-exist. Solanki states that in Southern Gujarat the Kolis supplanted the Bhils from the richer lands of the plains, driving them into the hills (1976:62). Shah comments that in Gujarat the high caste Hindus still confuse the two

(1982:12). We find their history linked in Maharashtra also.

To meet the terrorising raids of the Bhils, the British very soon found it necessary to raise a corps of Kolis, the hereditary rivals of the Bhils, under Col. Nuttal (Ghurye 1963:13).

It will have been apparent from what we have been discussing that the Koli presence is not restricted to Sind, nor to Gujarat. Ghurye finds them to be

spread over from Saurashtra, through Gujarat, down the coast through Thana and Kolaba districts and over the Ghats through Khandesh, Nasik, Ahmednagar, to the southern and western talukas of Poona district (ibid:1).

The Koli caste in the Kangra Hills far to the north are found by Parry (1979:37) to be a sizeable minority. In Gujarat they are a substantial proportion of the overall population, and therefore a considerable force to be reckoned with.

Their origins as a distinct group are unclear.

according to one account the Kolis and Mairs were originally the same tribe and came from the Sind, while the Mairs were the same as the Meyels or Mirhiras who entered India in the Fifth Century as one of the branches of the great White Hun Horde (Russell 1916:533).

another and perhaps more probable theory is that they are simply a western outpost of the great Kol or Munda tribe to which the Korkus and Nahals and perhaps the Bhils may also belong (ibid:534).

It is the more recent past, however, which is of relevance to this study. While we would agree with Pocock (1972:30) that the term "Koli" is used widely in Western India to refer to agricultural labourers in general, and that therefore its validity as a denoter of common ethnic origin is questionable, it must be said that the Koli of Sind do sense a common identity. More important to us, however, is what the implications of the term "Koli" are to the other groups in Sindi society.

The different Koli groups migrated to Sind at the turn of the century, driven by successive years of famine in Gujarat and Kutch, and attracted by the abundance of employment opportunities for labourers created by the major canal building projects underway at that time. As Pocock says, however, labouring appears to have been their traditional occupation

throughout Western India. It is the subservient nature of this occupation, rather than an association with impure substances as is the case with the Tanner and Sweeper castes, for example, which has contributed to their widespread categorisation as a "Scheduled Caste".

It is supposed that the common term "coolie" is a corruption of Koli, because the Kolis were usually employed as porters or carriers in Western India, as "slave" comes from Slav (Russel 1916:533).

In Sind today the Kolis' chief occupation continues to be labouring and tenant farming, and with it comes a subservient relationship with the Muslim landowners. In contrast, Parry finds the Koli of Kangra to be a diverse and comparatively affluent group, attempting to break free from the stigma of the "Scheduled Caste" label, yet unable to let go of the privileges afforded to them by it (1979:Ch4).

The Kolis' lowly status can also be attributed to their tribal past, however, hints of which still linger on in their reputation.

In Nimat the Kolis, like the Bhils, made a trade of plunder and dacoity during the unsettled times of the Eighteenth Century, and the phrase "Nahal, Bhil, Koli" is commonly used in old Marathi documents to designate the hill robbers as a class (Russel 1963:533).

for long ages the people inhabiting the region of the Kolis and round about and also the Kolis themselves have looked upon waylaying and robbery as the traditional activity of the Kolis (Ghurye 1963:10).

Despite their lingering "Scheduled Caste" status in India, the Kori's position among the other Hindus of Sind is relatively respectable in the eyes of Sindi Muslims. At the time of Partition (1947) the great majority of Sind's high caste Hindus, of the Brahman and Vaniya castes, fled to India. They were replaced in the towns by Panjabi speaking refugees from India, and in rural Sind by Sindi Muslim opportunists.

In a short space of time, therefore, two major changes occurred which were to greatly effect the Kori, thus underlying this study itself. Firstly, they lost their dominant higher caste Hindi neighbours. Within the context of Sind this has provided them with an ideal opportunity to better their own position within the hierarchy of castes. Secondly, however, the higher caste Hindus were replaced by Muslims.

The passage of higher caste Hindus has allowed the Kori to assume higher status than might otherwise have been possible, which they have achieved with remarkable success at the expense of most of the other Hindu groups in Sind, both Koli and non-Koli. It has also, however, left them with no higher caste traditions to emulate. Various Bhakti sects have made substantial inroads in this ideological vacuum. Although Bhakti was in evidence long before Partition, it has gathered force in the last forty years, and its doctrines are now a factor of major importance in Kori perception.

Whilst able to improve their status within the Hindu hierarchy, the Kori have also had to adapt to their political and economic subordination to Sindi Muslims, classified by the Kori themselves as "Sindi", who invariably look down upon the practitioners of Hinduism. Such a relationship between adherents to opposing ideologies is not new in Sind. It was in Sind that the first Muslim presence in the Indian Subcontinent was felt. From the times of The Prophet, Muslim travellers had been in evidence there, but an actual kingdom was an innovation.

The conquest of Sind by Muhammad ibn Qasim, and the incorporation of that province into the Muslim Universal Caliphate brought the Hindus and Muslims there in a relationship of a very different nature, that of the ruled and the ruler (Ahmad 1964:77).

The arrival of the British in Sind, with their divide and rule policies and their mistrust of Muslim power, was to the advantage of the Hindus. The Vaniya (Baniya) caste in particular, with their roots in trade, grew in influence and power in the decades before Partition. When the Vaniya left in 1947, they left much land behind.

The departure of the higher caste Hindus, the emergence of Bhakti, and the resurgence of Muslim power in Sind are changes which have effected the Kori in many different areas of their lives. This study, therefore, cannot just be of how the Kori perceive the world, but of how these perceptions have come to terms with the changes that have taken, and are still taking, place in it. In doing this our position as outsiders will enable us to distinguish facts and beliefs from collective justifications, and it is our hope that this study as a whole will be seen as a contribution to the sociology of knowledge (see also McGilvray 1982b:79).



## II. The Theoretical Context

At this stage, in order to place our "narrow" view of the Kori into the broader context of Indian Society which they share in, we must take into account the work of other "Indianist" ethnographers. Of one thing we are certain with regard to the Kori: this is that they firmly regard themselves as Hindus. Yet the 1911 Provincial Gazetteer of Hyderabad District regards this certainty with some doubt.

The population [of Thar and Parkar Districts, Sind], classified by religions shows a much larger proportion of Hindus than any other district in Sind, but it must be remembered that the Bhils and Kolis, who are very numerous in this region, would classify themselves as Hindus (1911:5).

We must presume that the scepticism apparent here arises from the fact that a distinction has been drawn between "orthodox Hinduism" and "tribal belief" - the Bhils and Kolis being seen to practise the latter. While we would question such a rigid definition of Hinduism, we must acknowledge the potential conflict within Hinduism between "beliefs" which are held at a local level, and those which find sanction in the Hindu texts. Here we return to our earlier discussion of the usefulness of the wider Hindu tradition to an understanding of perception at the local level.

### - Great and Little Traditions

Marriott sees in this opposition the ongoing process by which Hinduism develops. What he terms, following Redfield (1954), "Little Traditions" grow and spread in a process of "universalisation" to be added to the "Greater Tradition" of Hinduism. This is how the latter comes into being in the first place (Marriott 1955:197). At the same time, however, "Greater Traditions" undergo "parochialisation", being modified in the local contexts in which they are practised. In this way sanskritic deities have their names and some of their attributes changed to become local deities (ibid:199). Marriott argues that this dual process accounts for the great diversity of Hinduism and allows its continued existence as a living ideology with no central body of doctrine.

Marriott also acknowledges that Hindus themselves attach different values to traditions, often equating "Little" with low caste, and "Greater" with high - this is not to say that the castes do not practise both (ibid:209). It is this sort of distinction which has in all probability

prompted the writer of the Hyderabad Gazzeteer to question the Hinduism of the Kolji. Nevertheless, the Kori themselves recognise an opposition between those aspects of their tradition which are seen as low and those seen as high. Their situation, however, is further complicated by the fact that, in their social world, the brahmanic traditions of high caste Hinduism have been substituted by Bhakti.

#### - Bhakti

As is the case with many of the doctrines of Hinduism, the definition of Bhakti varies. Its origins, however, are ably summarised by Ahmad.

most of the ideas underlying all of the varieties of the Bhakti movement such as religion of love, monotheism, revolt against the formalism of orthodoxy, and the basic principles of egalitarianism are of Hindu origin (Ahmad 1964:132).

The Bhakti movement was initiated as a cult of love and devotion, based on the Bhagavad Gita and other sacred Hindu texts, by Alvar and Adiyar Brahmans of South India. There the Vaishna Vacaryas and the Siddantha teachers developed it into a metaphysical antithesis of Sankaracariya's idealistic formalism (ibid:140).

Dumont (1971b) equates Bhakti with a participation in the divine. The divine is no longer a multiplicity of gods, rather a unique and personal God " with whom the devotee may identify, and in whom he may participate" (ibid:55).

Although Bhakti, as a promoter of egalitarian ideals and individualism, stands against the formalism of "high caste" orthodoxy, as a literate tradition it shares more with this than with the village Hinduism against which the Kori oppose it. Its adherence to the doctrine of non-violence has given it further credibility as a substitute for "high caste" tradition, for its vegetarianism is set against the non-vegetarian traditions of local deities.

Dumont has commented upon similar vegetarian/non-vegetarian oppositions existing in many different parts of India. He does not see this as a division between two branches of Hindu tradition, but rather as a necessary complementarity in Hindu society, each opposite being defined by the existence of the other, and both thus playing necessary ideological roles (1970b:25). The existence of inferior, meat-eating gods enables the vegetarian gods to be further exalted by being accredited with the

greater power, just as the existence of lower castes adds to the status and power of the higher (ibid:27).

If this logic is applied to the Kori situation we see Bhakti and the worship of local deities playing complementary roles in defining each others' status. Yet, as the ethnography will reveal, the two are seen to conflict, and there are areas of Kori tradition where the former is bringing about change at the expense of the latter.

In another paper, Dumont contrasts the role of the renouncer to that of the conformer within Indian religion (1970b:37-49). The renouncer operates outside the constraints of society, yet leads the way in providing the ideals whereby society is governed. The conformer, typified in the Brahman householder, by remaining within society, reaps the benefits of the ideological system which the renouncer's idealism has created. As it benefits the Brahman to maintain the system, all innovation must come from the outsider. The two, therefore, complement each other.

Here Dumont brings in the doctrines of Bhakti, which are of interest given Bhakti's position in the Kori world. As the ideal way to achieve release from Hinduism's cycle of rebirths is through renunciation, this presents the Hindu with a path few can follow (ibid:49). This allows room for variants on this theme, one of which is Bhakti. The renouncer is opposed to the man in the world (Brahman), as the passive individual opposed to the active member of society. The bhagat embraces the one supreme being, Ishvar, and through devotion participates in Him, thus, by divine grace, achieving moksha (release). Bhakti, therefore, makes salvation possible through action and the need to renounce is transcended (ibid:56). Dumont concludes by equating Bhakti with the renouncer and opposing it to high caste formalism (ibid:58).

This opposition is reinforced by Bhakti's egalitarian ideals, although they are promoted in a passive manner which has tended to circumvent caste.

in order to conceive of a personal lord there must also be a believer who sees himself as an individual (ibid:56).

Pocock's study of the Patidar of South East Gujarat, however, reveals that the Bhakti sect, appealing as it does to the individual, is gradually replacing caste in a society where traditional allegiances are threatened by fast moving social and economic change (Pocock,1973:150-163). If this is



the case, then what is under threat is not just a system of social ranking, but what several influential Indianists have powerfully argued is the one thing which India's many societies have in common.

### - Sanskritization

We have already drawn attention to some of the conflicts inherent in Hinduism. Ahmad characterises it as

a large aggregate of belief, developed in the course of many centuries, evolving from the sacrificial hymns of the Vedas to the philosophical speculation of the Upanishads, the discipline of Yoga, the metaphysical subtleties of the Vedanta, and the passionate devotion of Bhakti (Ahmad 1964:73).

Srinivas comments that

while it is not possible to define a Hindu, it is not very difficult to identify a person as a Hindu (Srinivas 1962:150).

Srinivas it is who makes the first serious attempt to gather together the many strands of tradition practised by Hindus by viewing them in their social context. He identifies the spread of what he terms "All-India Hinduism" throughout the subcontinent and, using Radcliffe-Brown's notion of "Social Structure" (1952), argues that the caste system provides the structural basis for this process (Srinivas 1952:212). He maintains that caste has enabled Hinduism to proselytise without the aid of a unified religious body (church) or dogma. His study of the Amma Coorgs of South West India reveals that they

"exemplify a tendency which has always been present in the caste system: a small group of people break away from a larger whole of which they are a part, Sanskritize their customs and rituals, and achieve a higher status than their parent body in the course of a few decades (ibid:35).

Srinivas calls this process "Sanskritization", arguing that the high caste traditions emulated are drawn from the Sanskrit texts which thus form the basis of "All-India Hinduism". His contention is that throughout India social groups seek to achieve higher status by adopting the religious values of their superiors. Sanskritic Hinduism is seen to spread in two ways. Firstly, through "the extension of sanskritic deities and ritual forms to an outlying group", as a result of which "sanskritic deities assume different forms in their travels all over India" (ibid:214). Secondly, through the "greater sanskritization of the ritual and beliefs of groups outside

Hinduism", where we find "local deities assuming sanskritic labels and forms." (ibid) Hence Srinivas offers, as does Marriott after him, an explanation for Hinduism's great variety. Yet Srinivas acknowledges the more central role played by society in determining the traditions practised.

Such a theory has its problems. If Sanskritisation as a process has existed for years, why is so much "unorthodoxy" still apparent? Orans (1959), for example, questions whether it is inevitable that a society should reject its own ideals in favour of sanskritic ones. Pocock goes further, pointing out that the higher caste Patidar of Gujarat are continually changing their customs and habits so as to remain distinct from those who would imitate them (Pocock 1972:67). In Nepal Furer-Haimendorf finds that immigrant high caste Brahmans tend to conform to the moral norms held by the rich and powerful lower castes in whose society they share. The strictness of the rules by which they order their lives is somewhat relaxed (Furer-Haimendorf 1959).

The process by which lower castes imitate higher in an attempt to improve their social position can be found throughout India. What we can question, however, is the extent to which it can be labelled "Sanskritisation". A second attempt to unite Hinduism has been made by Dumont. On examining the world of the Coorgs he argues that they have more in common with Srinivas's "All-India Hinduism" than we are led to suppose. Within Coorg society there is hierarchical ranking along caste lines, a dependance on Brahmans for their performance of certain crucial rites as well as on the lesser castes for their ritual services, and basic notions of purity and impurity. Dumont asks: "What is there among the Coorgs that is not Hindu?" (Dumont, 1959:42)

"Sanskritisation" does not consist in the imposition of a different system upon an old one, but in the acceptance of a more distinguished or prestigious way of saying the same things. ...

the religious literature in Sanskrit makes people feel the unity of Hinduism, while in actual fact this unity is wider (ibid:45).

#### - Caste and Purity

In 1956 the journal Contributions to Indian Sociology was launched, with Dumont and Pocock as its co-editors. Their intentions, expressed in the editorial, were to discover a basis by which the sociology of India could

be united (Dumont & Pocock,1956). India is one, was their claim, and its unity was to be found above all in its ideas and values. These ideas and values found expression not in the variety of deities worshipped throughout India, but in the caste hierarchy itself. Dumont continues on this theme three years later.

I submit that any general social ideology, any ideology that predominates in a given society is by its nature global, all-embracing, all-encompassing. This is true of the ideology of caste; as it is also true of our own largely economic based ideology (Dumont 1959:20).

The sociology of India was seen as the sociology of caste. How, then, is caste defined? Bouglé has noted its three basic principles.

The spirit of caste unites three tendencies, repulsion, hierarchy, and hereditary specialisation, and all three must be borne in mind if one wishes to give a complete definition of the caste system (Bouglé 1971:9).

To Dumont, the main obstacle to an understanding of the caste system had been the failure to consider it as a whole (Dumont,1970a:32). Indeed, this theme underlies most of his works of that period, examples of which we have already considered above. He sees the ideology as encompassing the actual elements in society. The ideology of caste encompasses the individual castes, relating them to each other in what is the caste system. The caste system, therefore, is not to be understood in terms of its elements, but in terms of its ideology (Dumont,1959). This introduces Dumont's approach to sociology. When, for example, he is faced with the relations between power and ideology in Hindu Society he argues as follows.

in every concrete whole we find the formal principle [ideology] at work, but we also find something else, a raw material which it orders and encompasses and which it does not [immediately] explain (Dumont 1970a:37).

Dumont argues that this raw material (i.e. force, power, property, etc.) is accommodated by the encompassing ideology.

And so, to Dumont, caste is a state of mind, one which is expressed by the emergence in various situations of groups of various orders generally called "castes" (ibid:34). He argues that the fundamental structural principle upon which the ideology of caste is based is the pure/impure opposition. Here we find Dumont's "structure", a structure of the mind as opposed to Srinivas's "social structure". The pure/impure

opposition is seen to underlie the three aspects of caste given by Bougle. By the nature of its hereditary occupation, a caste retains a certain degree of purity or impurity. The purer the caste the higher its status. Finally, castes remain distinct so as to avoid the impurity of other castes, or, in the words of Bougle, "in the eyes of an orthodox Hindu any caste, other than his own, is in a sense impure." (Bougle 1971:23)

Dumont does, however, make a distinction between this opposition as a causal principle, and it as a means of rationalisation. The opposition is not the foundation of Hindu society

except in the intellectual sense of the term: it is by implicit reference to the opposition that the society of castes appears consistent and rational to those who live in it. ...

We do not claim that the fundamental opposition is the CAUSE of all the distinctions of caste, we claim that it is their FORM. ...

The requirement of Hierarchy is so exacting that it expresses in a unique language [pure/impure] phenomena which the observer can distinguish by, for example, linking them to different causes (Dumont 1970a:44-5, his emphasis).

Dumont thus acknowledges that, while classifications of castes according to their relative purity might not have created a particular caste hierarchy, to the Hindu it is an adequate justification for it. While the Hindu might explain hierarchy in terms of relative purity, the ethnographer can look for explanations elsewhere. (Bourdieu explores a similar theme when he takes what the Berber of North Africa see as a rule of marriage, that of FBD/MZS, and shows that, because of the many interlinking relationships in Berber society, it does not matter whether a marriage is arranged for reasons of status, financial gain, alliance, etc., it is possible to justify it in terms of the FBD/MZS rule; 1977:35-48.) It remains for us to explain how Dumont's opposition operates. He argues that its application is relative to each situation, taking the form of a relation between elements. Whatever, the deities, the occupations, the castes, they can always be related to one another in terms of relative purity so as to form a system. Indeed, he sees notions of relative purity to underly the ordering of the Hindu's very perception of reality. This contention is supported by the work of other ethnographers.

An analysis of the internal social organisation of a single large colony in Tamil Nadu ... suggests that hierarchy, or a pervasive ranking principle, is as much a part of the effective values of the lowest castes - both at the level of inter-caste relations

and intra-caste ... relations - as it is for the middle range and high castes. And this hierarchical or ranking principle is defined as consistently in terms of purity and pollution at the bottom of the caste system as it is at other levels (Moffatt 1975:120)

Similarly, in the Kangra Hills the Hindus

differ from other Hindus only in the degree of detail and rigidity with which they apply these principles of purity and pollution in daily life, and not in the nature of the principles themselves (Sharma 1978:9).

Indeed the need to mark off the pure from the impure not only pervades the Hindu's social and religious life but also his attitudes to all members of the cosmos. Within almost any category which he distinguishes the Hindu will rank some items as more pure than others (ibid:20).

Here, then in the opposition of the pure and the impure, Dumont claims to have found the underlying principle which unites the beliefs and practices of the subcontinent. (See also Bougle 1971; Srinivas 1952; Reddy 1973) This principle was drawn not from the "religion" of Hinduism, but from the social system of Hindus. While we will return to Dumont's theories in Chapter 2, mention must be made at this stage of some of the criticism they have received. Das and Singh Uberoi argue that, by subordinating the religious to the social, Dumont reduces the sacred/profane dichotomy in Hinduism to the pure and the impure, and they question the value of such reductionism (Das & J.S.Uberoi 1971). In particular they feel the concept of sin has been undeservedly ignored. Das later goes on to question Dumont's very definition of impurity (Das, 1982:130/1).

McGilvray (1982b) queries the part played by the pure/impure dichotomy in Hindu society, seeing the elevated status ascribed to it by Dumont as the result of his own prejudice towards the Hinduism of the texts and the higher castes, wherein purity is a major concern.

Rather than pursue single mindedly a unique vision of the "essence" of caste in all its manifestations, we should instead view South Asian symbols and theories of society in the light of the specific historical factors which gave rise to regional caste systems in the first place and which subsequently conditioned the tone and content of indigenous thinking about local caste hierarchies (ibid:35).

In McGilvray's view, Dumont has taken the search for an "All-India Hinduism" beyond its useful limits. It is certainly true that both Dumont



and Srinivas have had to fall back upon "high caste" orthodoxy in order to prove their arguments. If the pure/impure dichotomy is the "form" (justification) of caste rather than its "cause", then it will not necessarily follow that all castes, high or low, need submit to its rulings. While we have seen above how Sharma's ethnography supports Dumont's theory of the encompassing nature of the pure/impure ideology, in another article based on the same ethnographic experience she notes that the origins of the caste hierarchy in Kangra are explained in secular terms by Brahman and untouchable alike (Sharma 1978a:44; see also McGilvray 1982b:90).

#### - Hinduism and Islam

The real value of the contributions of both Dumont and Srinivas lies not in the extent to which their theories can be stretched, but in the central role they give to the caste system. The Kori regard themselves as Hindus and, as we shall see in Chapter 7, caste ideals play a fundamental role in their ordering of the society of which they are a part, and in the construction of their own identity (see also Young, C.S.L., 1984). Pocock's contention that in Gujarat Bhakti sects are threatening the institution of caste among the Patidar must, therefore, be taken very seriously, given the popularity of Bhakti among the Kori themselves. The Koris' society differs from that of the Patidar in one major manner, however, for the former are dominated by Muslims while the latter are themselves the dominant Hindu caste.

We find that, "As a religious force, Islam is in most respects the very antithesis of Hinduism" (Ahmad, 1964:73). Gaborieau, comparing the Nepalese Muslims with their Hindu counterparts, finds an irreducible opposition to exist.

What is a most sacred duty for one is considered as just the reverse by the others, to the Hindu who follow their Dharma Islam is Uto Dharma; conversly for the Muslims who practice submission (Islam) to the only God and His revealed law, who follow the true religion (Din) Hinduism is infidelity and idolatry...

For Hindus all castes of Muslims are impure ... Finally, in the background, each community is convinced that the other is the enemy (Gaborieau, 1972:93).

Returning to Ahmad, we find that

Psychologically Hinduism tends to be melancholy, sentimental, and philosophical; Islam tends to be ardent and austere. Hindu genius

flowers in the concrete and the iconographic; the Muslim mind is on the whole atomistic, abstract, geometrical and iconoclastic (Ahmad 1964:73).

If such were the extremes apparent in Sind's society it might be easy to construct a vision of the fragile and neurotic Kori few, surrounded and besieged by unenlightened Sindi hordes. Yet this is not the case, for the Sindi and Kori peaceably co-exist, despite their ideological differences. At the social level we could ask how the Kori relate to the Sindi. In Nepal Gaborieau approaches this question from the Hindu point of view.

... Muslims do themselves follow, in their dealings with Hindu castes, the rules of purity prevailing in their environing society. Therefore a rank must be assigned to them. While their status in relation to the pure castes is clear, problems arise as to where they stand in relation to the impure castes (Gaborieau 1972:103).

He finds that the Hindus' opinions of where to classify them vary depending on the criteria they use (e.g. food, touch, procreation, services performed, etc.).

In Kashmir Madan (1972) studies an interesting situation. The majority of the population is Muslim, and the Brahman Pandits, due to unique historical developments occupy positions of high status in society. Madan finds that

each group has ... two sets of representations, one stemming from ideological considerations and the other from the compulsions of living (Madan 1972:137).

Just as the Pandits qua Hindus see themselves in opposition to the mlechcha, Kashmiri Muslims qua Muslims identify themselves as Umma, the universal Muslim brotherhood, and regard Pandits as Kafirs ... destined to go to hell (ibid:131)

On the practical level, however, the Pandits need the Muslims to perform various polluting tasks and the Muslims, where they co-exist, rely on the Pandits as landlords and patrons. According to Madan, the Muslims order themselves hierarchically in occupational groups, classifying the Pandits in a similar fashion. The Pandits, on the other hand, see the Muslims as part of a caste system which they themselves dominate. We therefore find two differing perceptions of society: "dual social orders" (ibid:139).

What are legitimately seen as occupational groups from the Muslim angle are castes, "caste analogues", or "caste substitutes"

when viewed in terms of the Hindu caste system which they, in fact, help to constitute in Kashmir (ibid:128).

Given this situation in Kashmir, how do the formerly "Scheduled Caste" Kori of Sind relate to their Sindi neighbours and patrons? Do they bow to the Sindis' view of their low status in the privacy of the Kori village in the same way that they are forced to do in the market town and before their landlord? Can we find a similar dual social order as, indeed, Madan (ibid:139) suggests we might?

### III. A Brief Guide to the Thesis

Our review of the Kori's history in Sind, and of the relevant literature from other areas of India has raised many issues which we hope to deal with in the course of this study. At the same time we hope to focus on and contrast the different categories of Kori perception we discussed in 1.1.

Chapter 2 discusses three of the main perceptions which the the Kori categorise as "fact": that which they take for granted as being shared by all, Kori and non-Kori alike. Knowledge of these we consider to be a necessary precondition for the study of what they would see as "beliefs". Firstly, there is the fact of rebirth; secondly, the pure/impure dichotomy - this section includes the further discussion of the theories of Dumont and Das promised above; thirdly, the concept of knowledge, and the role this plays in the life of the individual as a means to an end.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 discuss what the Kori themselves might be more likely to classify as "belief". Chapter 3 looks at Bhakti as a response to the demands on the life of the individual of the mechanism of rebirth. Chapter 4 looks at the more practical beliefs which enable the Kori to cope with the day to day ordeal of living. Chapter 5 is a study of goddess cults. It ends with a discussion of the conflicts between vegetarian and non-vegetarian goddesses, and between the goddess cults and Bhakti.



Chapters 6 and 7, although studies of Kori "facts" and "beliefs", by placing them in the context of Sind's society, includes discussions of the way some are used collectively as justifications to disguise conflicts which the Kori cannot come to terms with. Chapter 6 examines the different stages which mark the life cycle of the individual, some of which are dominated by Bhakti, others by Goddess cults, and still others by general tradition, but all of which take place against the background of a society dominated by Muslims. In this Chapter, many of the changes taking place in Kori ideology and practice are highlighted, and the forces which motivate change are discussed.

Chapter 7, although the concluding chapter, centres around a study of the Koris' ideology of caste, and again the changes taking place and the forces which motivate them are drawn to the fore. The discussion at this point returns to some of the theories mentioned above and adds to them the Kori perspective.

### SECTION 1.3: THE FIELDWORK SETTING

#### I. The Village

The material used in this project was gathered mainly in and around the Kori village of Sirah. Sirah lies approximately twenty-five miles to the east of the city of Hyderabad, and two miles, as the crow flies, from the main Hyderabad-Mirpur Khas road. Access by dirt track makes the distance approximately four miles. Sirah's main geographical features are sand to the north, canal to the east, and oasis to the west. Within this area and to the south lie well-worked fields broken by the occasional sand dune.

The villages of Sind's rural Hindus vary greatly in size, from small isolated hamlets of two or three families to large communities of fifty families or more. The feature which most have in common, however, is the high hedge of matted thorn-bush which surrounds and protects them. The more permanent villages of the land-owners and their Muslim tenants

have large solid walls of plastered mud, and huge gates through which entrance to their inner courtyards can be gained. But such villages have existed for a long time, making the expense and effort of building walls more worthwhile. In comparison, most Kori remain landless, and the thorn barriers around their villages offer a reasonably effective protection against thieves and the dangers of rural life.

In recent years, the patel (village headman) has had his own house enclosed by a mud wall, a project for which no other villager had much enthusiasm at the time, nor the willingness to pay the high costs which the Pathan wall-builders demand for their labour. Even so, perhaps the patel's mud wall is a sign of the changes taking place in the Kori lifestyle, as with patience and hard work they earn themselves more wealth and security.

## II. The Villagers

The number of married couples living in Sirah varies constantly. In 1977 as many as forty-two men supporting families were noted, yet by 1981 this number had decreased to thirty-three. Between these times several families had come and gone. The frequency with which Kori families move from one location to another is by no means peculiar to Sirah which, compared to other villages, has a more permanent character than is usual, and reasons for this will be suggested below, when land ownership is discussed. Seasonal variation also occurs. During the hot and the rainy seasons, when there is wheat harvesting, onion planting, and cotton picking to be done, several families of Parkari Koli and Sindi (Muslim Sindi) add their numbers to the village population. These labourers, however, construct their own impermanent dwellings outside the village boundary.

Although all the Kori in Sirah are related to each other in some way or other, whether through ties of kinship or of affinity, the village itself can be divided territorially into what will be called hamlets. Here the ties are stronger. In theory the hamlet is made up of the houses of a father and his married sons. In practice the composition varies, and individual families can be found to be living together for a variety of reasons ranging from convenience to economic dependence. A hamlet may

have a strong leader who co-ordinates and commands the activities of its members. It may be made up of families who rely upon each other as little as possible. The only boundaries between hamlets are those of a social nature. There are no physical barriers between them to prevent entry, although unless one visits often and is well-known, one faces the ferocity of the hamlet dogs.

While several families came and went between October 1980 and June 1982, this did little to alter the overall demographic structure of Sirah's ten hamlets. As the material for this study was gathered mainly in the form of conversations with the village residents, a brief outline of the main characters is a necessary pre-condition of the material's presentation. To this end the hamlets will be dealt with in turn (Refer to map and charts at the end of this chapter).

The only entrance to Sirah is from the south. The small irrigation channel flows along its southern side from the east, and there is a rough bridge which has to be crossed. Over this bridge there is a small clearing, and to the left stands the stone representing Hanuman, the Monkey God, who is guard and protector. Rising over Hanuman is a pole to which is attached a white cloth. Almost directly opposite the entrance is one of the two village shops, and the main village thoroughfare veers past the right of this shop and continues beside a mud wall as far as the village clearing.

Hamlet 1 The large walled compound on the left of the village clearing is the hamlet of Bharat Patel (patel - headman). Bharat is of the Akhiyani Zach (zach - patrilineage). He is one of the three younger brothers of Rama, the old patel, who died in the winter of 1977/78. Although not the eldest of the surviving brothers, Bharat Patel owns the most land, and is now the largest single landowner in the village, for the larger lands of the old patel were divided among his sons after his death. He spends a lot of his time beside his most recent project: a tube-well which has been sunk to the west of the village. Here he sits in the shade of the tree beside the water channel, engaged in deep or light hearted conversation with whoever happens to be passing.

Bharat Patel is a slow speaker, but his words are well thought out. His wife, Buri, in contrast, is quick-witted and sharp-tongued. She is his second wife and is much younger. They share their compound with their

many children, with his married son, Bozo Akhiyani, who lives with his childless wife, with a poor young relation of Bharat Patel's wife, and with Kanu Driver, the driver of the tractor, his wife and children.

Hamlet 2 In the south east corner of the village is the hamlet of Lakshman Bhagat, who is the youngest brother of Rama, the old patel. Lakshman Bhagat owns sixteen acres of land. He has earned the title of bhagat because of his recognised interest in the doctrine of Bhakti, his adherence to the teachings of a guru, and his lifestyle which aspires to asceticism. He is a very portly man, and similar in his speech to his brother, Bharat Patel. His main interest, as much as anyone can afford the luxury of having one, is in Bhakti. His wife, Jari, is his match in religious fervour. She often takes the lead among women on ritual occasions. Also in this part of the village are the houses of Lakshman Bhagat's married son and married daughter. Ramzi Mahaleyo, his son-in-law, is also noted for his zeal for Bhakti.

Separately, but nevertheless in the same area in contrast to the rest of the village, live Nilo and Manoo, of the Paji zach, the younger brothers of Jari. Nilo is the village kotvar, the aide and envoy of the bhagat. He is a tremendous joker and will poke endless fun at anyone and everyone if the opportunity presents itself, or if he sees the need.

The final house in this hamlet is occupied by Buro Bhopa. The word bhopa refers to one who is a channel for, or who can use the powers of the local goddesses. Nevertheless, Buro Bhopa will quickly assure you that the term is only used as a nick-name and that he has no great knowledge or power in such matters. Buro Bhopa is a father's brother's son of Lakshman Bhagat. His two brothers also live in Sirah, but in a different part, and, for brothers, they have relatively little contact, apart from on occasions of ritual or crises.

Hamlet 3 To the west of Lakshman Bhagat's hamlet, and bounded by the east side of the village clearing, is the hamlet of Satruga Bhagat. Satruga Bhagat is the eldest of the three surviving brothers of the old patel. He is known as "The Bhagat", but, although older than Lakshman Bhagat, he has of late shown less enthusiasm when it comes to his participation in the rituals of Bhakti. Conversations with him have tended to bring to light his feeling of superiority over his brother who he sees as a lesser bhagat. And so, Satruga Bhagat tends to hold himself aloof

from Lakshman Bhagat's enthusiasm.

Satruga Bhagat is one of the larger landowners, possessing over fifty acres. But as such he has a substantial reputation for meanness and is not over popular. He is somewhat of an orator, and his loud voice is often heard at village gatherings. His tongue is wicked when he is in a rage and has been the cause of several families leaving the village. He shares the hamlet with his married son, married daughter, and his children.

Hamlet .4 In the north east corner of the village clearing is Radhu Akhiyani's hamlet. Radhu is the second eldest son of the deceased patel. He shares his house with his youngest brother who is unmarried. His two married brothers live nearby, as does the wife, Zakal, of an older brother who died, leaving her with two sons and a daughter. Zakal has been remarried since, but refused to leave Sirah to live in her husband's village, and lives now on her own with her half-grown family. It is the general opinion of the village that it is the wives who rule Radhu's hamlet, and much is made of this, although Radhu himself does not seem to mind. The hamlet possesses a large herd of goats as well as four-fifths of Rama Patel's land which amounted to over two hundred acres. Ownership, however, is shared between the brothers.

Hamlet .5 In the north west corner of the clearing is the house of Lavi, of the Dungarani zach, who is the husband of Radhu's elder sister, Ratani. Lavi was a great associate of Rama Patel and has lived for a long time in Sirah. The land reforms which occurred in the sixties have given him no land, however, and perhaps this has been the reason for the bitter side to his character, which often finds form in his sharp and sarcastic wit. A very strong bond exists between him and his wife, who is an expert in wedding songs and ritual.

Behind Lavi's house is the house of his daughter and her husband, Raidan. Further to the west is the house of Lavi's brothers, Manzi and Pansa Dungarani, the latter having been married in 1982. Together these houses form a hamlet, although the house of Manzi remains somewhat separate.

Hamlet .5 To the north of Manzi's house, and in the north west corner of the village, is the Adi'hra hamlet, and there live the married brothers, Arjan and Lakshman Adi'hra. Arjan is the only villager who has an external



source of income. He is a welder who works in Hyderabad, commuting several times a week on his motorcycle. He is relatively well off, receiving a regular salary, and is owed money by several villagers. His step-father was said to have been a Christian evangelist, working for the Church Mission Society based in Hyderabad before he ran off with another woman. Arjan's mother, Dadi Zatu, lives with him. Lakshman is the elder, but poorer, brother and is a tenant on the land of a local Muslim landowner. These two brothers are the only baptised Christians in the village who have any depth of knowledge of Christian doctrine.

Recently their mama (MB), Sahadeva, moved to Sirah bringing his wife, his only daughter, and his aging mother with him. They share the Adi'hra hamlet. Mama Sahadeva is an old man with a back said to have been bent by an attack of smallpox when he was young. For a living he chops bushes to make charcoal, an occupation which is not too respectable, being undertaken chiefly by the wandering Pathan and Baluchi hillmen. His mother, who is fondly referred to by most as Nani (MM), is the oldest woman in the village. Together with Dadi Zatu and Arjan's wife's mother, Dadi Zati, she was one of the triad of "old ladies" who were a constant source of information for this study.

Dadi Zati, the third "old lady", is the widow of the deceased Rama Patel's kaka (FyB). She has no surviving sons, but four daughters all of whom are married and live with their husbands in Sirah Village. Her husband owned several acres of land, and this has been legally inherited by Rano Akhiyani (her HBSS). In practice Dadi Zati retains the land-owner's right to half the crop, and the farming of the land itself is shared between Rano and his neighbour Ramshi Varesa, who is married to Dadi Zati's second daughter, Zomi. The income from this land has enhanced Dadi Zati's status and she is one of the more influential and independant-minded of the village women. On her death it is acknowledged that Rano will have complete right of ownership to the land. Dadi Zati lives with her youngest daughter, Mali, who is the wife of Arjan Adi'hra.

Hamlet 7 To the east of the Adi'hra hamlet in a row are the houses of Mothi Akhiyani, Zavo Paji, Ramshi Varesa, and Rano Akhiyani. In terms of social space these families can be grouped together, but there is no leader among them, and as regards work and property ownership they each go their own separate ways. Mothi is elder brother to both Rano and

Buro Bhopa. He is a gentle man and has Christianity among his interests, the result of which has been his son, Pansa, being educated as far as the sixth class at the Mission Hostel in the town of Mirpur Khas. Mothi owns sixteen acres of land and is fairly well off. His family owns the second village shop of which Pansa is in charge.

Mothi Akhiyani is married to Netha, a commanding woman, who is the sister of Zavo Paji, who lives next door. Zavo is the remaining village land owner, possessing sixteen acres. He has a reputation for being "canny", and uses his wealth to speculate. His wife, Haku, is the third daughter of Dadi Zati.

Ramshi Varesa, living next door to Zavo, is another man who ranks Christianity among his interests. Another of his pastimes is the smoking of cannabis and this has brought him into more than usual contact with the local Sindi. He has five daughters and a son. His wife, Zomi, and daughters, the eldest of whom is married and lives there with her husband, Hadhu Vean, are a strong political force among the women in the northern side of the village, having Dadi Zati as a close relation and ally. To the east of Ramshi's is the house of Rano, with his wife and young family.

Hamlet 8 In the north east corner of Sirah lives Viro Paji, elder brother of Zavo, who is married to Baya, the eldest daughter of Dadi Zati. Viro's hamlet used to be shared with his younger brother, Sona, but Sona left in 1980 to live in a village several miles to the south west. Indeed, Viro himself moved temporarily to Sona's village in the summer months of 1982, as he owns many livestock and fodder at Sirah was scarce at the time.

The three hamlets (E6,E7,E8) which are bordered by Sirah's northern side tend to unite in opposition to the rest of the village. A reason for this is that these are the three hamlets in which Dadi Zati's married daughters reside. A further reason for this unity could be the pattern of land ownership in the village which will be discussed below. It is in these hamlets also that elements of Christian belief are in evidence. This is mainly because of Dadi Zati's influence and the wealth and position of Arjan. Arjan's influence in the past led to the baptism of Dadi Zati, her four daughters and their children, and also of Mothi Akhiyani, Ramshi Varesa, and Viro Paji. Lack of understanding, and enthusiasm, about Christianity can be seen as related in direct proportion to the length of

time since the person's baptism, and to the distance of kin relationship with the original Christian. There was a tendency for Christian teaching, which had been erratic, to add to the villagers' "beliefs", rather than replace them.

Hamlet 9 The remaining Kori hamlet in Sirah is that of the Zandariya, which lies beyond Bharat's hamlet in the south west corner of the village and to the left of the entrance. Here live three brothers of the Zandariya Zach: Pansa, Chandar, and Devo. The second brother, Chandar, is married to the sister of Lavi Dungarani. Pansa, the elder, is a small, plump, quiet man, who worries constantly about his health. The Zandariya tend to keep themselves to themselves and their hamlet is more isolated from the rest than is the village norm.

Hamlet 10 The only people who are not Kori, but do live inside Sirah, live in their hamlet to the east of the village entrance. These are people of the Kachi Bhi caste. Their elder, Viram, is a money lender and speculator who has lent Bharat Patel a large sum of money to help with the financing of the tractor and tube well. Bharat has, in the meantime, given him a place to live, which he shares with his wife, his married daughter, and son-in-law. Eventually he plans to build a hamlet of his own beside the tubewell and set apart from the actual village. The Bhi are only really made welcome in the house of Bharat. They keep even more to themselves than the Zandariya.

These then are the hamlets of Sirah and a rough outline of their main characters. The house from which research was conducted lies on the northern side of the village, between the Adi'hra hamlet and the house of Mothi Akhiyani.

Information gathering, however, was not limited to Sirah. The village of Dharamu Patel lies by the canal bank, forty minutes walk away to the south east of Sirah. This village is made up of several Mayani hamlets and a Dungarani hamlet. Bordering on, and to the north of Dharamu's village is a village of approximately the same size occupied by Sindi Muslim tenants, and a wall of mud separates the two. Contact, however, is kept to a minimum, although a shop in the Sindi side necessitates a certain amount of coming and going. Nevertheless, it was noticed that the women of Dharamu's village had a far greater knowledge and confidence in the Sindi language than the women of Sirah.

Hamlet 11 Sirah's Dadi Zati is herself of the Mayani Zach and is well-known and respected in Dharamu's village. Her brother's son, Buro Mayani, and his sister, Nena, used to live in Sirah itself until a quarrel drove them to live with the Mayani of Dharamu's village. Dadi Zati arranged and paid for the marriages of both Buro and Nena, whose father had died and their mother, having married again, was twice widowed. Regular contact takes place between them, and Dadi Zati is always expected at Dharamu's village for the annual Parwa celebrations.

Buro and Nena, with their families, have a hamlet of their own, in so far as their houses are spacially set apart from those of the other Mayani, although in comparison to Sirah the social barriers between the hamlets of the same zach are hardly recognisable. Buro's wife, after ten years of marriage and many trips to see various "doctor" and other specialists, remains barren.

Buro is the central figure in a group of Kori cannabis smokers who gather, if the opportunity presents itself, to while away the hours together. Ramshi Varesa from Sirah is an associate of this group, as is Rano Akhiyani in whose house they gather to smoke when in Sirah. In the Mayani village it is Karam and Shavo Bhopa, Buro's brother and brother's son by classification, who meet regularly in the evenings at Buro's home. Buro has more than average contact with the Sindi because of a shared interest in cannabis, and is a well known figure for many miles around. He is a great story-teller and entertainer and his company is much sought after by Kori and Sindi alike.

Hamlet 12 Shavo Bhopa is the keeper of the Mayani zach goddess temple. Whereas in Sirah there are several small shrines, the Mayani in Dharamu's village keep the major Mayani temple. Shavo Bhopa's duties include temple maintenance, and the making of the necessary offerings throughout the year. The temple itself is a small affair, smaller than the average house, and contains images, pictures, and items of temple equipment. It faces east and there is a raised platform outside its door for men to sit on. Shavo is skilled in the ways of the Bhopa, possessing knowledge of the goddesses as well as of cures for various ailments and afflictions. He performs his duties in addition to those of tenant farmer. His wife, Bhopi Zati, is stepmother to the wife of Rano Akhiyani from Sirah, and Shavo Bopa is Rano's father-in-law.

Hamlet 13 To the north of Sirah village, some two hundred yards distant, is the isolated hamlet of the Shekhani. Dasrath Shekhani, used to live in Sirah itself with his two married sons. His daughter is the wife of Bharat Patel. The menfolk left because of a row they had with Satruga Bhagat, and there continues to be enmity between them. The Shekhani houses are on a patch of sand between the fields, although they still have tenancies, as before, with Bharat, as well as with Rice Iniat on whose land their hamlet is built. Dasrath is an old man who enjoys letting his thoughts and opinions be known. He is also attributed skills as a herbalist and worker of various minor spells, such as the ones used for drawing out the venom from a scorpion bite.

Hamlet 14 About a hundred yards beyond the Shekhani hamlet, is the village of the Hangani Zach, comprising some ten houses. The Hangani village is a recent arrival in the area, built on the land of Rice Iniat for whom they work, and with an attractive high wall on their north and west sides, also built for them by their landlord. Jalu Hangani is married to Buro Mayani's step-sister. Jalu's father, Karna Bhagat, is a minor bhagat, invited when needed, and usually as a last resort if no bhagat of greater standing can come. Karna is a humble man, and his wife has the often called upon skills of a midwife.

These are the Kori settlements in the close vicinity of Sirah, although several others lie within a few hours walk. Contact with other Kori villages is not, however, dictated by distance. Rather it is a matter of relationship. Any celebration or rite other than that of the most minor nature necessitates the inviting of representatives from relatives' families.

### III. The Household

Essentially, the village house is shared by a mother, a father, and their married children. To these are added their elderly and/or widowed parents, and their youngest married son's family. Ideally, a married son will have his own house constructed within the hamlet as soon as his younger brother marries and the wife arrives to relieve his own wife of the household duties. Authority is wielded by the father over his family, by the mother over her daughters and younger sons, and by the elder sibling. In practice this is often not the case, and personality or



material wealth can play a large part in deciding who tells who what to do.

The village house is essentially a building of four mud walls and a door. Except for the winter months it is seldom used as more than a store room. Every household must have an alternative area where guests can be entertained. This may be in the shade of a nearby tree, but most families attach a rough roof of thatch to either the front or side walls of their house. When the cold wind ceases this becomes their living area. In a corner will be an additional hearth where Rotlo (flour pancakes, the staple of the Kori diet) can be cooked with the least discomfort to the women. Well-off hamlets often construct separate areas altogether, uthak, where guests can be accommodated well away from the women who, depending on their relationship to them, may well have to "avoid" them. The separate Uthak is a Sindi institution which is becoming more prestigious and fashionable among the Kori. In Sirah it is most evident in Satruga Bhagat's hamlet, where one has been built of brick.

The organisation and running of the house is in the hands of the mother, daughter, and/or daughter-in-law. Although the men folk are occasionally needed, e.g., in the maintenance of the roof and the external plastering of walls, they are required to do little else. Similarly, it is the father and his sons who organise the farming of the land. Although women are required for menial tasks, such as cotton picking and weeding, it is generally recognised that they could not manage at all on their own. Even Mothi Akhiyani, one of the village men most dominated by his wife, is in command on his land.

Agricultural instruments are not so much the property of the individual household as of the extended family. A ploughshare will be shared between several houses although one man may be its recognised owner, and if a family uses its resources to buy an ox-cart it does so with the foreknowledge that it will not have the sole rights to its use. There can be seen to be a general rule which states that the more expensive an item is, the more uncommon it will be and therefore the more it will be shared with others. This rule covers all areas of property, from a cooking pot or pepper pounder to a pair of oxen. Even the new tractor of Bharat Patel is not exempt from this rule, although the circumstances must be exceptional, (e.g., a wedding or a funeral), and its expenses must be met before it is given on loan with Kanu to drive it.

It is the dream of most young boys to be married, have a family, and own a pair of oxen. The ox is still an essential part of the farmer's agricultural equipment. Tractors are becoming increasingly more evident, but not to the extent that they are forcing tenants from the land. The oxen are the responsibility of the father and his sons, and they are a great source of pride and respectability.

Milk giving animals, on the other hand, are the pride and responsibility of the women. The hamlet's houses, whether constructed side by side, or at right angles to, or facing one another, will have an open space, shaded by trees or rough shelters, where the animals are tethered. The most common milk giver is the goat, the most coveted is the buffalo, and the most prestigious is the cow. Buffalo give the most milk, but if one can afford a cow as well then its ghi (clarified butter) is said to be the best. The most useful way to think of the larger village animals is as extensions of the family. They are certainly considered as such by the Kori themselves.

One or two households also keep chickens. They live off the scraps they can scavenge and the occasional handful of grain. They are kept for their meat, not their eggs, and honoured guests are paid the compliment of being served chicken.

Every village has its dogs. Dogs are not owned individually or corporately but are adopted by houses or hamlets in return for their services. Because of their unclean habits, they are considered among the most impure of animals. Nevertheless, as scavengers, or more importantly as watchdogs, they are as essential to the village as its thorn fence.

There are certain accepted rules of behaviour which must be kept to within the village if it is to function effectively as a community. It would be very difficult for a single household to exist in isolation, the help of neighbours being essential in all areas of life, from work in the fields to the marrying of a son or daughter. There is, therefore, a social medium wherein mutual exchange of goods and services is the norm. Open antagonism between households cannot be sustained over a long period without causing intolerable strain on the village as a whole. Where antagonisms exist they must be kept hidden under a superficial layer of politeness and good manners.

Most occasions of ritual festivity or sorrow are attended by the village as a whole. If an arrangement of marriage is successfully concluded a boy will be sent around the village inviting all the men to join in drinking a celebratory cup of tea. Not all will come but each house will send a representative male, unless wishing to indicate displeasure or hostility. Similarly, the celebration of the wedding itself is an affair for the whole village as well as for the guests. Everyone is well feasted, and sent home with plates loaded down with food for those who could not come.

Everyone is also expected to help, should their help be requested. This includes the sharing of items of property, - pressure lamps for lighting the proceedings, the big cooking pot for the rice, etc. Prestige is at stake and all must attempt to give the guests the impression of wealth and harmonious living. An unsatisfied guest is a slur on everyone.

#### IV. Land

The year in Southern Sind is divided into three seasons of roughly the same length: the Cold Season, Shi'ara, the Hot Season, Uhnara, and the Rain Season, Varhara.

Traditionally the Shi'ara comes after the festival of Parwa (Divali) in November. It is dominated by the cold wind blowing from the north. The staple crop of wheat is planted and weddings are planned and performed with the money from the cotton harvest. Millet is harvested and used as a substitute for the depleting stocks of wheat flour. Old people huddle around fires in the evening, and those who suffer from tuberculosis find that their coughs have returned.

The Uhnara is heralded by the Hutani (Holi) festival. The hot wind blows in from the sea and the ripened wheat is harvested, threshed, and winnowed. The fields are cleared and cotton, the cash crop, is planted. Vegetables are also grown for the money they bring in at the Hyderabad and Karachi markets, and in the orchards the mangos ripen in the wind. Uhnara is a time for farming and little else.

The Varhara brings with it a lull in the breeze, a rise in the humidity, and flies. While the cotton ripens the villagers celebrate Hachmo, the

festival which honours Sitla Mata, the smallpox goddess. This is the season when the Kori gather in the name of Bhakti. There is also a succession of local religious fairs, mera, held in towns and villages throughout Sind. By late September the rains, if they have come at all, have ceased and the heat has returned. The women take to the fields for the cotton harvest, while their men make plans for spending the money it will bring in.

The presence of the Kachi Bhil within the village has already been mentioned. During the months of the Hot and the Rain seasons, there is an annual influx of labourers from the rice growing areas of Lower Sind. Some three families of the Parkari Koli, and a family of Sindi offer their labour for the hire of the tenants in their wheat harvest, and in the planting of their summer cash crops of onions and peppers. These labourers construct their own impermanent dwellings outside the village on the raised ground beside the water channel, and remain until the cotton picking season, keeping very much to themselves.

It has also been mentioned that several of Sirah's villagers are land-owners in their own right, and that a large number of landless villagers are their tenants. Having landlords, Sirah is a comparatively wealthy Kori village. It boasts a tractor, a tube well, three motorcycles, six handpumps, and two pedal driven sewing machines, all owned by individual households. Generally speaking, the average Kori village would be fortunate to possess any one of these, although by and large the Kori are now better off than they used to be and this trend is showing no sign of reversing itself.

The village of Dharamu Patel which boasts no landlords, is not as well off as Sirah. Dharamu himself owns a pedal sewing machine and has had a hand pump installed which all the village uses, but the other villagers can only boast one transistor radio between them. Perhaps poverty also has its advantages, however, for Dharamu's village has a more open and relaxed atmosphere. The landlord's influence ensures the villagers' protection from robbers, unlike the isolated Hindus of Sirah who have to rely upon their guns and high fences, and so there is less emphasis on security. The average village will live on land given by their landlord, and the latter would be the one who possessed, and perhaps allowed the use of, the aforementioned luxuries.

Ownership of land provides a greater security with regard to livelihood and place of residence. Where the average Kori man will move villages several times in his lifetime, this is not the case with the Sirah landowners and their close relatives. But a large proportion of Sirah's villagers are not above and beyond the temptation to move to another village if they have been told that life there is easier.

The land which is owned by the Sirah villagers lies to the west and south of the village. To the north and north west is the land of Rice Iniat, a wealthy Sindi landowner, and Rice Ali, his sister's son, owns some twenty acres which lie to the west of Sirah beyond the tube well and surrounded by Kori land. Most of the land in the area was acquired by Kori and Sindi alike when a redistribution was organised in the late 1960s by the government of Ayub Khan. But, as is often the case in a society where the majority are illiterate and uneducated in the ways of property conveyancing and law of ownership, the ideal distribution in no way resembled the actual distribution. The result was the pattern of ownership which now exists in Sirah.

Most of the land ended up in the possession of Rama, the old pate, and his four brothers, Bharat, Satrugna Bhagat, and Lakshman Bhagat. Since his death Rama's land has been shared between his three sons. The few other villagers who retained possession of their original entitlement were the father of Mothi Akhiyani, and the husband of Dadi Zati, both of whom were of the Akhi'ani Zach and close relatives of Rama. Mothi still owns his father's land, while his younger brother, Rano, looks after that of Dadi Zati.

The final landowner is Zavo, who of the three brothers of the Paji Zach, is the only one to have retained his sixteen acres. The rest of the Paji land was reputedly stolen by Satrugna Bhagat, and this grievance helps to keep the northern "line" of the village, with its three small landowners, separate from the rest with the three remaining brothers and their dependants. Many of the villagers also work the land of Rice Iniat and Rice Ali.



## V. Power and Authority

Within Sirah village there is no institutionalised structure of authority, and power varies according to wealth, age, and family ties with others. A rich old man with a large family would have the advantage over an old man with no wealth or no family. If an old man has not much of any of these, he finds his age is a disadvantage, as he is considered old and of no use.

In the insecure, impermanent villages of Kori such as the Mayani, however, the power of the patel is related to his connection with the land farmed.

SHAMU DUDA'HRA - The patel is the man who draws the others to the land. The man who shows others where land is that can be worked on can become the patel of this new settlement. But he must have the support of the people, and he must do adequate work on their behalf. [6/77]

The patel appears to be the intermediary between villagers and landlord. He is the spokesman of the villagers, and the representative of the landlord. This was so in the case of Rama before the redistribution of the Sirah land took place. It can still be seen to be the case in the village of Dharamu Patel.

Methods of settling disputes vary, and depend on the seriousness of the matter in hand. The following is an answer to a question about the problems caused by theft within the village.

SHAMU DUDA'HRA - If a person is accused of theft, but will not admit to it, then the whole village meets together. All the matters concerning the case are discussed and the relatives of the accused are questioned. People can be asked to swear on the Gita which makes lying very difficult. If a man is found guilty, then he must pay compensation or is forced to leave.

This type of meeting can occur on a larger scale, for example, if the accused is from another village. The landlord can also be appealed to to set things right. Only when it is a matter of "blood" (violence/injury/murder) are the police brought in. This is avoided if at all possible, for it would not be right for us Kori to take our affairs to others. [6/77]

Whereas in the past the panchayat (Council of Elders) appears to have taken a more active role in disputes and in the decision-making process of the Kori, its importance now seems to be decreasing.

BHARAT PATEL - If, for example, I were to refuse a tenant access to my land and a dispute were to arise, the tenant can say, "I will call a panchayat". He will then invite various wellknown and respected elders, who will gather together and hear the case. Four or five will do, but often as many as twenty will gather.

This is exactly what happened with Ramshi and Surya. - This quarrel arose when Surya broke off his engagement to Ramshi's daughter, Rani, and married another woman. - Whatever the panchayat decides must be obeyed, for it has the power to outcaste a dissident, forbidding him from Kori homes. He would not be able to attend Kori Bhao (religious gatherings) or weddings, and would not be able to marry his children.

There often used to be panchayat but these days people just go to their landlord. [2/8/81]

## VI. The World of the Sirah Villager

The villages in Sirah's vicinity, other than the Kori ones already described, are mainly those of Sindi, although there are three Bhil villages: a Marwari Bhil village to the north west, and two Kachi Bhil villages to the east between Sirah and the canal. A small Sindi village lies several hundred yards to the north east across the fields. These villagers farm the land of Rice Iniat, and contact between them and those of Sirah is kept to a minimum.

To the north east lies the large village of Sirah proper, from which the Kori Sirah takes its name. Nearby is another Sindi village, the nearest point to Sirah possessing electricity and therefore boasting a flour mill.

Rampur, a sizeable Sindi village with over a hundred permanent houses, lies due east from the Kori Sirah, on the canal bank. From there a horse and carriage can be hired which will go as far as the main Hyderabad road, should there be a need for speedy transport. Rampur also boasts a flour mill, as well as a doctor of sorts who dispenses medicines and injections to those who cannot afford the time nor the fare to visit the doctor in Tando Ala Yar.

The more direct way to the main road from Sirah is by the track which skirts the sands to the north and meets it at the small tea shop village of Seyyidpur, which has the third and final flour mill used by the

villagers. There is a shorter route to Sirah which follows an everchanging footpath directly across the sand, but which is a struggle for children, and can only be traversed in the cool of the day or in the Shi'ara.

The main road is usually the limit of the village ox's experience, and the man who wishes to drive his ox cart all the way to the nearby town must be confident that the busy traffic will not panic his animals. Every main road in Sind has regular buses. Where buses do not go, often a train does, and so there are very few places in lower Sind which the Kori would not be able to reach in a few days.

The town of Tando Ala Yar, ten miles distant, has an important role in the lives of the Sirah villagers. Every town has its teashops, each serving its own particular tribe or social category. Tando Ala Yar, Tande for short, boasts several Kori teashops. These are centres of communication where men meet and exchange news, and where messages are passed on from one village to another. Whether a man comes to buy clothes, or provisions, or to get his plough sharpened, or to take a child to see a doctor, he will call in for a cup of tea before he heads home again. Most Kori teashops shelter the sewing machines of Kori tailors, experts in the specifically Kori style of clothing and in the latest of their fashions. Men bring them their custom and drink tea while they wait.

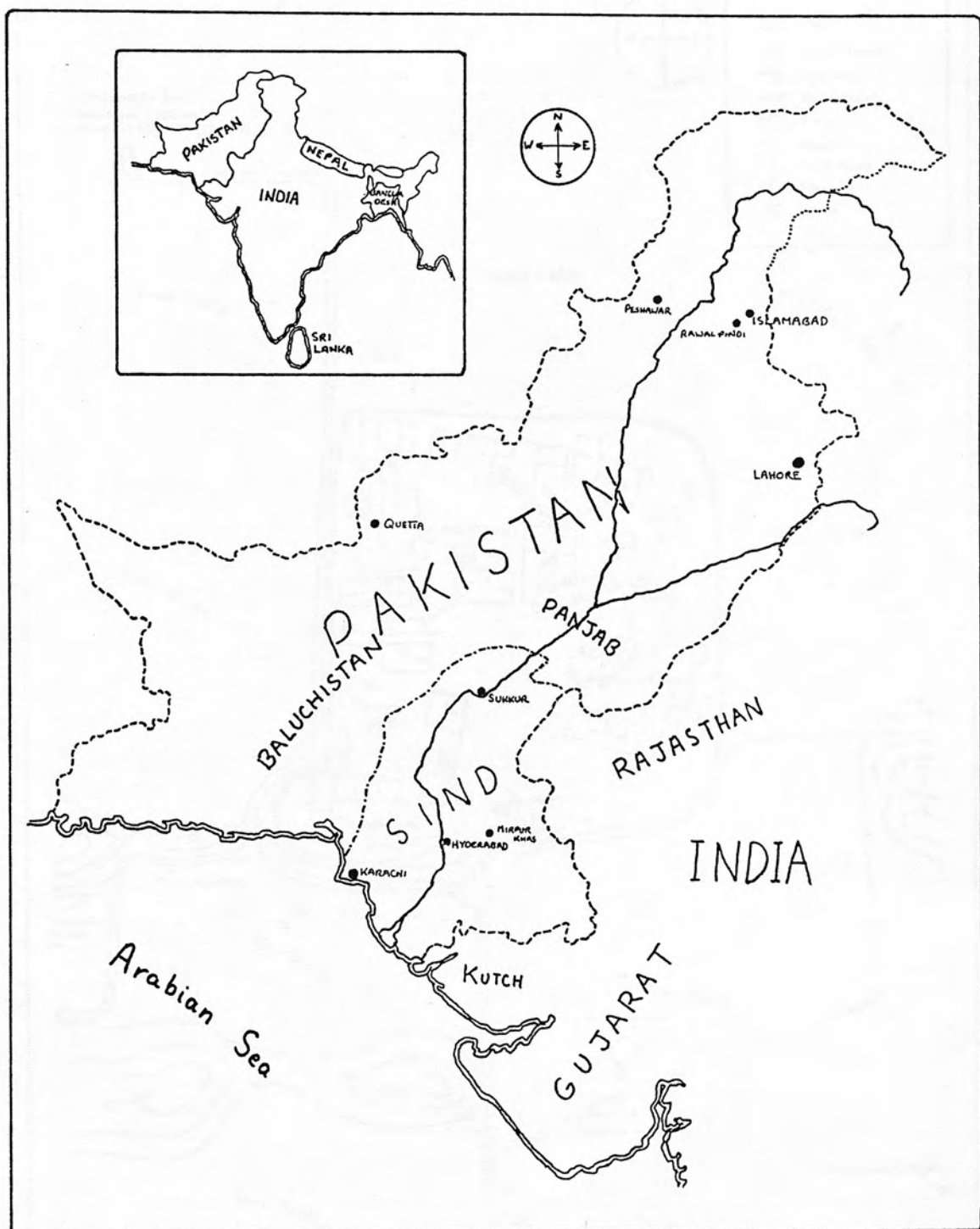
Tande is the source of those items which are not found in the countryside: tea, sugar, cloth, equipment. Some of these things can be bought in the village shop, but not for such reasonable prices. On a different scale entirely is the ancient city of Hyderabad, by the banks of the Indus, thirty miles to the west of Sirah. Hyderabad is large and busy, and not too popular among the villagers of Sirah, who go there only to sell vegetables at the market, or to attend the hospital. But visits are rare, and if what is needed is not available in Tande, most villagers prefer to stay at home.

If Hyderabad is large and noisy, Karachi, by the great sea, one hundred and fifty miles to the south west, is in a world set apart. Its enormous size and variety make it a special place, tales of which are told to children by fathers who have taken the vegetables down on the trucks to the market there. Karachi prices are always better and can often be heard announced over the radio. Karachi offers the delights of the "modern" world. Tall buildings, lights, Foreigners, wide roads. Young boys

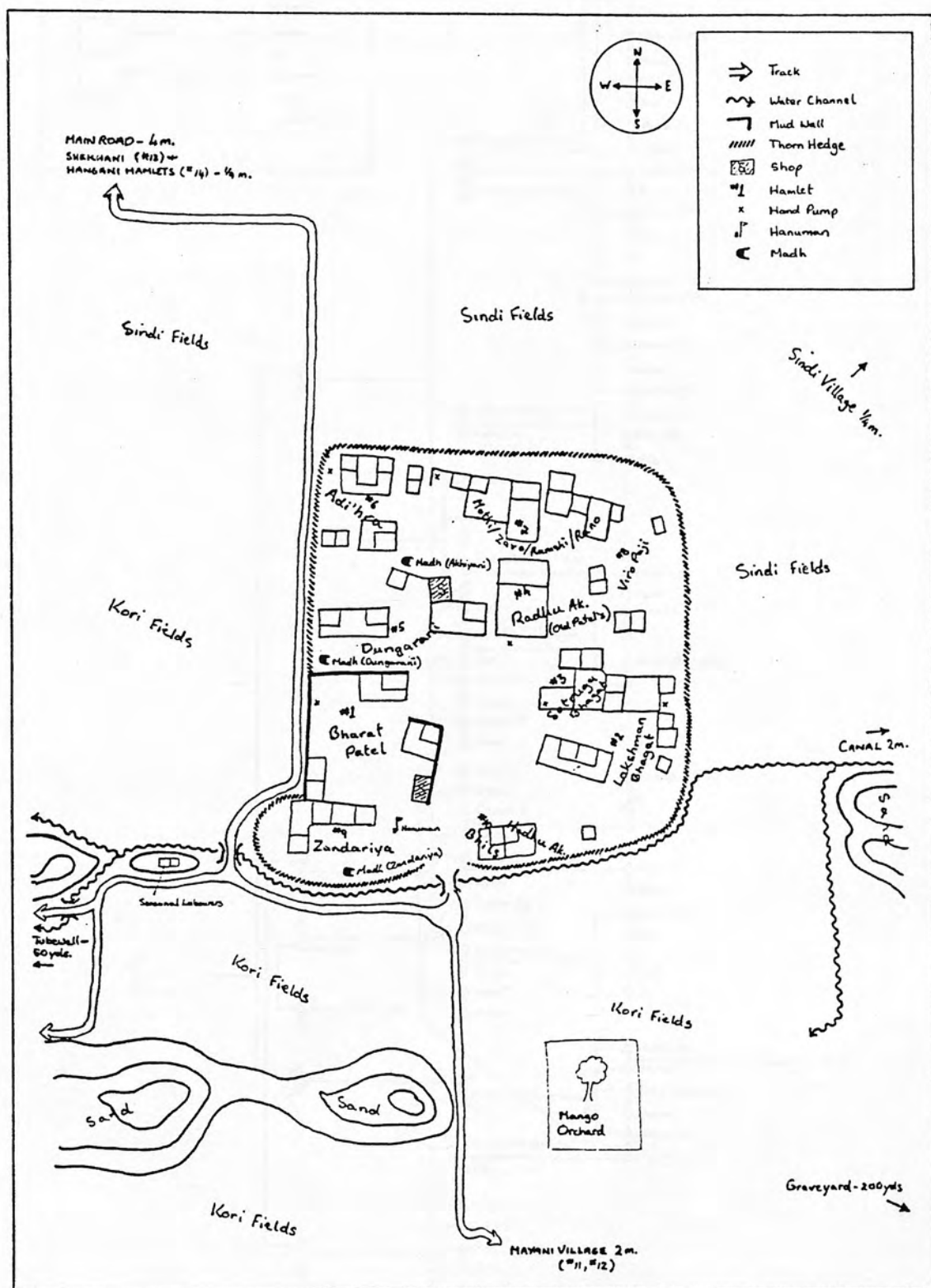


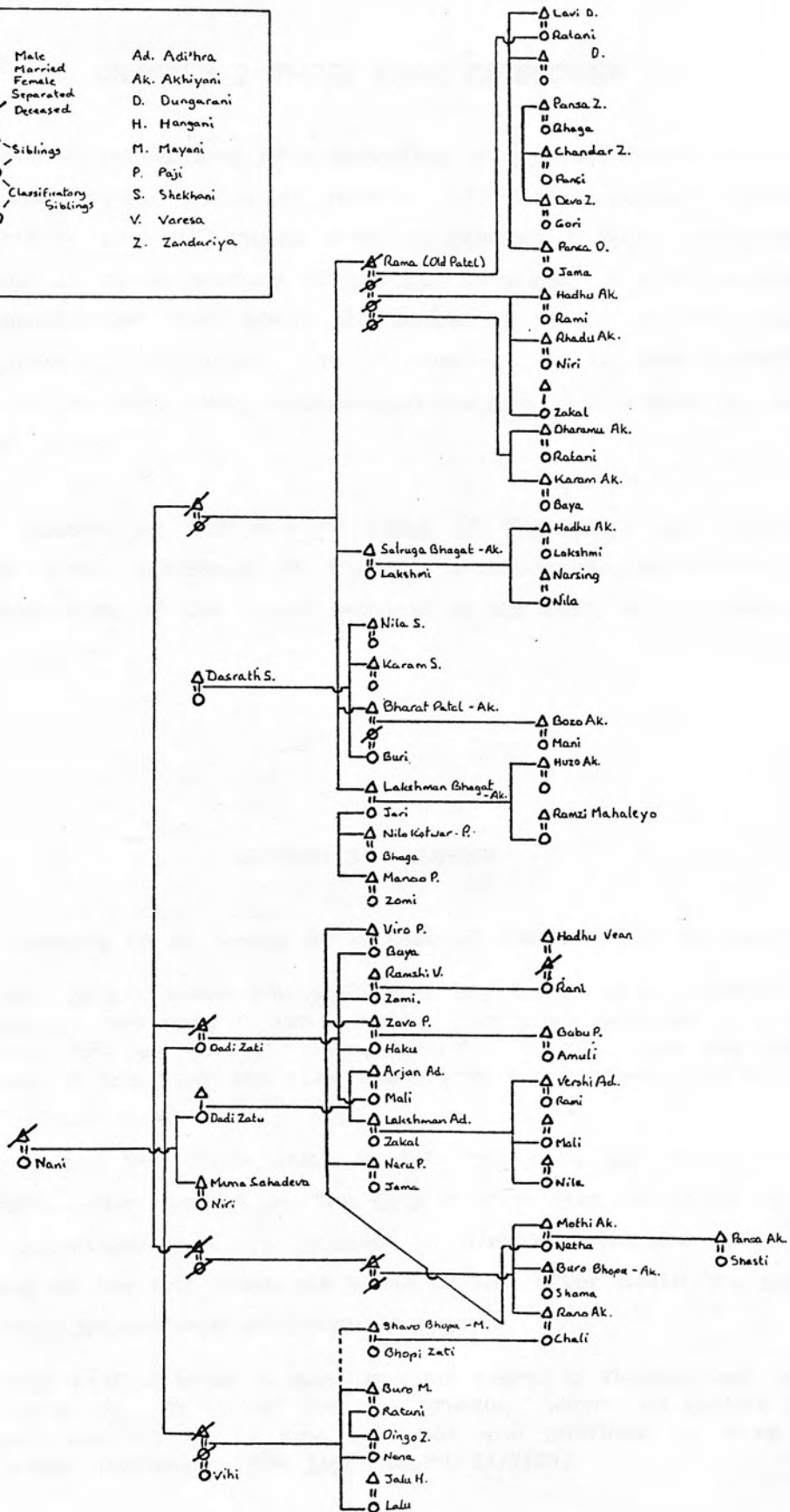
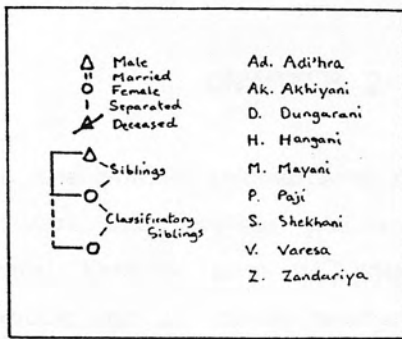
long for the day when they will be old enough to accompany their fathers, and there are several older village men who have never been and probably never will.

The main aim of this section has been to give the reader an impression of village life which will add colour and depth to the study which is to follow. An attempt has been made to describe Sirah itself, and those surrounding villages which are a part of the social area studied. A brief indication has also been given of the workings of the family, hamlet, and village as communities, and of the lifestyles of the villagers themselves and the various factors which may effect them. It is acknowledged that in size and wealth Sirah is not the Kori norm. Sirah's permanence, and the existence there of large numbers of people who provide a pool of information for study, are to our advantage, however, and the extension of this study to include the smaller and poorer surrounding villages, most notably that of Dharamu patel, will also provide us with a necessary contrast to Sirah itself.









## CHAPTER 2: THREE BASIC CATEGORIES

When the voiced perceptions of a collection of Kori individuals are studied and what are initially pieces of isolated information gradually grow and overlap, then a pool of shared ideas is created in the ethnographer's notebook and in his/her mastery of the Kori language. This is the pool of accepted possibilities from which the perceived reality of the individual Kori is supposedly constructed. It is presumed to be the unchallenged firmament of the Kori world, unchallenged because it is shared by all who inhabit that world.

In this chapter we shall examine three of the pillars upon which the Kori reality rests. Knowledge of these is a necessary precondition for a fuller understanding of the topics explored in the rest of the thesis.

### SECTION 2.1: REBIRTH

The first category to be looked at is that of reincarnation: of rebirth.

DADI ZATI - When the ziv leaves the body, what is left? Just earth. The body is like a house. We come and live in a house, and then we go and live elsewhere. In the same way the ziv lives in one body and then changes it for another. [1/6/82]

The ziv is the life force which inhabits the body but which exists in its own right. The lifespan of the Kori is then seen as merely a single cycle in a potentially endless progression of lifespans lived and to be lived. When talking of the less immediate world of life after death the Kori are prone to more philosophical eloquence than usual.

ZAVO PAJI - When a man dies his heart is finished but his ziv carries on. It is like the clay griddle. When the griddle breaks you have to get a new one, but you continue to make rotlo (Wheat pancakes - the Kori staple). [1/7/81]

SANDO ZANDARIYA - The devotees sing the hymn, perhaps you know it, which talks of what happens at death

Earth becomes earth,  
Light becomes light,  
Air becomes air.

JNY - What do you mean when you speak of "light"?

SANDO ZANDARIYA - Light? The light which is in our eyes when we see. [27/5/82]

SATRUGA BHAGAT - We all need ziv to exist. And yet, before we are even born the ziv must exist, must it not? Otherwise how would we have life? Trees do not breathe, do they? Nor do stones. And yet we who are but earth, we breathe and live. We need a spirit (athma) for life. And that is why it is important to forget about our bodies. For they are just earth, and when they die they will be left and forgotten. Rather it is important to concentrate on our spirit. [24/5/82]

The notion of rebirth is supported by occasional glimpses of a future life.

BAPU AGISANI - I have heard it said that once there was a man who knew he was going to die. Somehow Ishvar (The Supreme Deity) must have told him. As he lay dying he stated that there was a man of the Mali caste who lived near Mirpur Khas and who looked after an orchard. He stated that he was to be reborn in this man's house. After his death people were sent and, sure enough, the Mali did exist, and a child was soon due to be born into his house. [30/4/82]

I did not encounter what the Freedts describe as a popular belief in Shanti Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, - that the ziv often remembers past lives (1980:538). The Kori did, however, assert that the move from one life cycle into another is not always made alone.

DADI RATI - Mama Sahadeva's father and mother both died on the same day. He died first and his wife set about making the food that was to be taken to his grave. She made rotlo, and then fell asleep. She died in her sleep. People say that as a couple they were as close as two sparrows. It was his ziv which returned to take her's with it. The two ziv left together. [1/6/82]

(A similar case where a ghost troubled an entire family is mentioned in 4.5.)

Occasionally the rebirth mechanism may run into difficulties.

RAMSHI VARESA - The time when everyone is to die is written in Ishvar's book. Let us imagine, then, that Ishvar looks in his book and sees that it is time for, say, a certain ruler to die.

He will then order one of his assistants (dhut) to go and fetch the ziv of this king. For would Ishvar go himself?

What happens if the assistant goes off and brings back the ziv of someone else by mistake? Ishvar looks in his book and says, "You have brought back the wrong ziv. Return it at once!"

So the assistant takes the ziv back, but by then the man has been buried and the ziv can not re-enter his body. So it becomes a ghost, and wanders around until the time when that man's name does come up in Ishvar's book. Then the assistant comes and takes it away again. There have been instances when the ziv has been returned before the body has been buried, in which case life has returned to that person.

ZOMI (w/o Ramshi) - Yes, once there was a man living here who was from Tando Ala Yar. He died, and was taken off to be buried.

RAMSHI VARESA - Yes, but as they laid him down by the grave, he suddenly sat upright. Everyone was scared and they all ran away apart from his brother. He turned and, seeing his brother, said, "Oh, but I was very tired."

"You were not asleep at all," cried his brother, "you were dead. Can you not see the freshly dug grave beside you where you were about to be buried?" [8/7/81]

(In Uttar Pradesh the Freeds find similar notions of bhut being created through souls being recalled too soon - 1980:525.)

## SECTION 2.2: IMPURITY

A second category which is accepted unchallenged by the Kori is that of impurity - abaral. The notion of impurity has been suggested by Dumont (1970a:47,50-1) to be the irruption of the organic into the social. It has the ability to effect the lives of the living through their contact with it. Contact renders one impure, and this restricts ones relationships with others who would wish to avoid this state, until the balance is restored through an act of purification. How do the Kori describe their notion of impurity?

I once went through a list of things excreted from the body with Bapu Agisani, asking his opinion as to their purity. -



- (Saliva) - Impurity
- (Tears) - Impurity
- (Rheum) - Impurity
- (Earwax) - The ear's waste, impurity
- (Blood) - Is not blood of the body, and are not all our bodies dirty?
- (Hair) - What does hair do? Nothing! Hair is impurity. If hair falls into our food then the food is ruined and must be thrown out. It will not do just to remove the hair. All that is excreted from the body is badness. It is the body getting rid of the dirt that is inside it.
- (Nails) - Nails scratch heads. Hands are used in defecation and urination. They are all impure until washed with water. By water the body is made pure. Otherwise it is unclean.
- (Milk) - Animal milk is pure and we drink it. For the child the milk of its mother is also pure. But it only drinks it for twelve months after which it eats food as we do. When it grows older it gains understanding and will no longer drink its mother's milk. [30/4/82]

It is difficult to isolate impurity objectively, as Bapu has tried to do here. Impurity is recognised through subjective experience: sight, smell, touch. Excretions which bring life and health, such as milk, cannot be impure. Those which serve no purpose and are prone to unpleasant decomposition are obviously impure.

Something more ambiguous than milk is semen.

JNY - Is semen impurity?

BAPU AGISANI - Yes, after the man and woman have slept together the woman becomes impure. But the man remains pure. To purify herself the woman must bathe and wash her clothes, just as to clean a dirty dish you wash it and the dirt is removed. [6/5/82]

The impurity of birth, however, perhaps because birth is an event with major implications for social life, has more far-reaching implications.

JNY - If the mother of a ladi (bride) or lada (groom) gives birth, does the wedding still go on?

NANI - Yes it goes on. If, for example, Zakal was going to give birth then I would allow her to do so in my house, as Ganesh (the deity who presides over the wedding rituals) would be enthroned in her own house. Then after two days, once she had bathed and washed her clothes, she would return to her house. But the wedding itself would go on. [21/1/82]

Here Nani seemed to be in favour of a pragmatic solution to an inconvenient situation. As we shall see below, birth pollution is taken more seriously when the local goddess is involved.

Just as birth is a public incident, so too is death.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - You are made abaral by touching the earth of the grave when you toss in your handful at the burial; or by touching the corpse itself. That is why you must wash your hands and feet afterwards. And when you re-enter the village you are sprinkled to be made pure again. [16/3/82]

Water which has been purified is the most common agent of purification. Ten days after the birth of her younger sister, Zakal's daughter sprinkled water from a brass drinking vessel on the doorsteps of each house in the hamlet.

DADI ZATI - She is sprinkling pure water. After a birth an unmarried member of the household takes something gold, or the tail of a cow, and dips it in a brass drinking vessel of water. This makes the water pure and it is then sprinkled to purify all the houses in the hamlet.

This is also done at burials. When the men return from the graveyard, and before they enter the village, a boy sprinkles them with pure water. The women may not go to the burial but they do go and have a bath. [16/5/81]

There are other agents of purification.

DHARMU PATEL - When you touch the corpse you become impure. Therefore, before you can re-enter the village, you must be sprinkled with water so that you are made clean. It used to be the custom that you could be made clean by a live coal which would be left outside the entrance. Everyone had to touch it with a finger or a toe, so that it burned a little. But now water does just as well.

It also used to be the rule that if I touched a Bhil or a Meghvar and therefore became impure, then I would have to purify myself on a burning coal before I could enter my home. [15/3/82]

In addition to water and fire, there are indirect methods of purification. These involve acts of dharam, (righteous deeds), and will be explored fully in Chapter 3 below. The above, however, shows us that impurity can also be associated with other castes.

ZAVO PAJI - The Meghvar (leatherworkers) eat carrion, and by doing so they are dirty. To us carrion is forbidden. [25/5/82]

ARJAN ADI'HRA - abaral is associated with low castes: Bhil, Parkari (Koli), and Meghvar, with whom we do not eat, and whose plates we keep separate. When, through their touch, you become impure, then you become as they are. We are high caste, equal

to Rajput and Vaniya. [16/3/82]

We see here that impurity springs initially from contact with what is impure - organic waste, but that it is contagious and can be shared with others. In the case of the lower castes it is perceived to be a permanent attribute which effects their status, and thus their relationship with the Kori. Impurity, however, is not just contagious, it can be dangerous.

DADI ZATI - Vershi (s/o Lakshman Adi'hra) has very sore eyes. He has gone off to see the doctor today. The doctor will give him an injection in the arm, and then take a swab and draw blood and redness from his eyes.

You see, he went and sat with his wife just after she had given birth. A man should never do that as it can be dangerous for him. It has effected Vershi's eyes. One should keep well away until one's wife has got over the birth. [15/7/81]

(Nichter describes the inverse in South West India, where a state of purity is deemed to offer some measure of protection against illness - 1977:142,220)

Impurity not only effects the relationships between humans, but also their ability to draw upon the other forces at large in the world.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Bhopa (those who mediate the power of the goddess) have to observe certain rules, otherwise their charms will not work. For example, if a woman gives birth a Bhopa will not enter her house, or eat food which she has cooked, for one and a quarter months. [21/12/81]

BURO MAYANI - Rules are needed for the Bhopa to follow if he were to become unclean. If, for example, he has to go to the graveyard to bury someone, then there are certain rules he must observe or his knowledge (ilim) will not work. Before going to the graveyard he must remove his thread - this is the the charm worn by Bhopa on their upper left arms. He must remove it and put it safely away in his trunk. Then, when he returns unclean, he must first bathe, then put on clean clothes, then finally put on his thread again. If he does not then he will remain unclean and his power will not work.

Various things can make him unclean. If he sleeps with his wife at night, for example, or if a child is born in his house he cannot enter it without first taking off his thread. [17/12/81]

This last sentence also confirms the need for an unmarried boy or girl to be the one to sprinkle water in purification (see above) for they are

still virginal and pure. Women who no longer menstruate are also considered more pure, and therefore more suitable for the performance of certain rites of healing (see 4.1). We can see, however, how impurity restricts the Bhopa's relationship with the supernatural. Just as the Kori avoid those who are impure, so Goddesses avoid the Kori when they are impure.

DADI ZATI - Those who honour the gods will sprinkle pure water on their houses after a birth. If they do not they will not be honoured, and they will have to repeat them after water has been sprinkled. This is because of the dirt caused by the birth. [8/3/82]

In some cases it is only time that is able to remove the impurity and allow rites to be performed successfully. Ramshi took his son to his temple to offer the first lock of hair to the goddess, but had returned with the boy's hair yet unshorn.

RAMSHI VARESA - A woman had given birth at the village of the temple on that very day. The ceremony, therefore, could not take place.

JNY - How long was it postponed for?

ZOMI (w/o Ramshi) - For the impurity of blood one has to wait one and a quarter months. [7/1/82]

In Kangra Sharma has contrasted the higher castes' vulnerability to impurity favourably with that of deities, for she argues that the former can actively avoid it whereas the latter are passive recipients and can be polluted in worship (1978b:71). Our evidence, however, indicates that if an offering is made to a Kori deity in polluting circumstances they merely ~~absent~~ themselves from their effigy and the offering is ineffective (see 5.1).

The noticeable thing about the Kori view of impurity is that it becomes important only when social categories are highlighted or crossed. Their concept thus ties us in with the arguments of Das, Douglas, and Dumont, and allows us to return to the discussion of the pure/impure dichotomy begun in 1.2. For, while we find Dumont's view that pure/impure is a social category helpful, we have yet to see how he sees what is and is not impure being defined by the Hindu.

Purity and impurity are seen by Dumont to classify the Hindu's opposition between that part of man which is natural and that part which

is religious, and therefore social. Following from this, all that appears social and in that sense has a "dignity" is seen as pure, and is opposed to that which is natural and "base" (Dumont 1970a:65). This illustrates the similarities between the ideas of Dumont and those of Durkheim before him, who saw, in religious worship, the worship of that which symbolises society (Durkheim 1915).

In her discussions of impurity Das has diverged from Dumont's theories. In her study of the Girhya Sutras, manuals of sacrificial ritual (c. 500 - 200 B.C.) she finds that, although rituals appear to be based upon a set of complementary oppositions, these do not relate directly to the pure/impure dichotomy.

the opposition between the antithetical concepts of right and left, and the four cardinal points provide fundamental categories for the symbolisation of ideas like fertility, prosperity, life, and death (Das 1982:91).

Earlier Das had argued that

"No useful purpose is served in trying to deduce the right/left opposition from the opposition of pure and impure" (Das 1976:249). Impurity occurs in rites on both sides, for example in childbirth and in cremation. Certain rites are also pure on both sides, for example marriage and ancestor worship.

In her definition of impurity Das builds on arguments forwarded by Douglas (1966). Douglas equates boundary zones in human classification with danger, this danger symbolising the need for social groups to maintain order in an environment of encroaching chaos. Threats to orderly classification are seen as threats to society itself. Das sees impurity symbolising the danger which arises when, on birth or death, the human cannot be classified as existing in either the social or the cosmic sphere. Impurity surrounds the border zone between these two orderly categories (see also Kaushik 1976:266,286).

The body is seen as a metaphor of society and the cosmos, and its margins are seen to represent the boundary zones of classification. There is, therefore, a tendency to give them an impure status, impurity arising from liminality (Das 1982:127).



This tidy theory does run into difficulties when put into practice, however. Milk, for example, which crosses a bodily boundary yet is still pure, poses a problem, as do the various excretions of the cow which are considered pure. Whether or not the body is a metaphor for ordered reality, it is by no means a perfect metaphor.

Among the Kori relative purity becomes important when boundaries, such as those of caste, sex, the superhuman, the dead, are encountered. If there is no interaction across boundaries then impurity becomes dirt and rules are relaxed. Nevertheless, the notion of impurity remains never too far below the surface of Kori belief, and will constantly re-emerge throughout the course of this study. We will return to it more fully, however, when we look at caste in chapter 7.

## SECTION 2.3: KNOWLEDGE

### I. The Kori and the Sindi

Our understanding of the Kori concept of knowledge, (ilim), would be limited if it were not seen in the light of the Muslim presence in Sind. This major and opposing influence is brought to light in the following conversation which is typical of many which occurred during the period of study.

JNY - Why do women veil their faces? (here I referred to the custom of "avoidance".)

DADI ZATU - Because a woman must veil in front of the following men : her husband's kaka (FyB), bapa (F), motba (FeB), (she reeled off a list of names).

JNY - But why?

DADI ZATU - Because she is their vau (junior kinsman's wife). A vau must veil in front of her in-laws.

JNY - But my wife does not.

DADI ZATU - Ah, but your customs are different.

JNY - Even so, who was it who, in the very beginning, taught

you to veil?

DADI ZATU - Our elders had these customs, and so we follow them also.

JNY - Why did they do it?

DADI RATU - It is the custom. Everyone "avoids" apart from the Sindi. They do not veil. But then, they marry their own kin so why should they? But the Bhil, Vadiyara, Meghvar, all "avoid". [4/12/81]

"Avoidance" here is seen by Dadi Ratu to be an integral part of Hindu identity. The Sindi do not "avoid", therefore they are very different, and this is borne out by other major differences, for example, the marriage patterns. mentioned. The Kori seldom forget the presence of the Sindi, their dominant neighbours, whose presence effects their traditions in many ways. For example, the following was given as adequate explanation for the Kori festival of Hachmo (see ch 5.1).

HADHU VEAN - At Hachmo we eat sweet things. This is why it is celebrated, just as the Sindi have Eid so that they can eat sweet things. [11/8/81]

And not everything which is Sindi is opposed. The following conversation took place at Buro Mayani's village, although admittedly Buro himself was unusual in that he spent much time in the company of Sindi.

BOPI ZATI - It is a good thing to visit the graveyard and honour the dead. If not daily, one should go at least once a week to offer food and such things. Even the Sindi do that.

BURO MAYANI - But the Sindi place stones at the grave which do not disappear. Surely this is one custom we can learn from them?

MANZI MAYANI - True! I have no idea exactly where the body of my father lies. I only remember that there were banana trees nearby. [19/10/81]

## II. Ilim

While the Hindu mind was primarily concerned with what was true, the Muslim was exercised over what was right (Ahmad, 1964:76).

To the Kori true knowledge comes from Ishvar, the supreme deity. Such knowledge is given a word used by the Sindi, ilim. Those who possess

ilim, therefore, have power. The authenticity of ilim is proved if its connection with the divine can be established. One straightforward way of doing this is by tracing it to the scriptures which are revealed by Ishvar, and therefore true. As in most societies where literates are in the minority, what has been written down is given power and authority far beyond that of those who have done the writing. The scriptures themselves are seen to stand unchallenged as the ultimate sources of truth and falsehood. Arjan, a professed Christian, literate, and with general knowledge surpassing that of the average Kori, had the following to say about the Bhagavad Gita.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - The Gita is very powerful, and cannot be abused. This I know for certain. If a man tells a lie by the Gita, he will suffer for it. The Gita is a sound means of telling lies from truth. [15/5/81]

Ramshi, who was prone to being excessively knowledgeable himself, was ever the champion of the authority of the written word. The following conversation occurred after I had been questioning his wife, Zomi, about some wedding songs.

ZOMI - We were teaching John the lagan song and he was writing it down.. (She broke into the song) "The thousand dholo brought the lagan from the astrologers.."

RAMSHI VARESA - And what does "dholo" mean? Can you tell me that? Can you?

ZOMI - Does it mean ziv?

DEVO ZANDARIYA - To me dholo may mean that which you strike with when you are in bed. (This amused many, but Ramshi was not put off.)

RAMSHI VARESA - You see! You see! Here are you women singing songs and you don't even know the meaning of their words. But the word "dholo" must mean something, and it must have its origins in the scriptures somewhere. But do you ever wonder what it means? No, never! [7/1/82]

There is always room for cynicism, however, and Ramshi's enthusiasm met its match once in the guise of Dadi Zati and Mama Sahadeva. This time we were sitting together in the evening and I was asking about the newborn son's naming ceremony.

JNY - Why do the children shout "Kapila! Kapila!" at the naming rite?

DADI ZATU - It is done in happiness.

JNY - Yes, but there are other, more common ways of showing happiness.

RAMSHI VARESA - He is right! If we wish to show happiness we usually dance and sing.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - It is to let everyone know what the boy has been named. (The new name is called out at the same time - eg. "Rano Kapila! Rano Kapila!". See Chapter 6.1)

JNY - And what does "Kapila" mean?

RAMSHI VARESA - I do not know, but it will have its origins somewhere in the scriptures.

DADI ZATI - It has nothing to do with the scriptures. It is just something our ignorant elders have always done!

RAMSHI VARESA - No! You cannot say that! All the rites we perform can be traced back to the scriptures from which they originated.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Rubbish! A few years ago we Kori possessed no more than a couple of quilts each, and would spend one month here and one month there, chasing around trying to find work, and at the beck and call of every landlord who came across us. When did we ever get any of our customs from the scriptures?

Now look at what we are claiming, for we have jewelry, and fine clothes, and shawls, and motorcycles, and a tractor! [3/1/81]

Ramshi was unconvinced by this outburst, which in turn indicates the variety of opinions on the matter. Ramshi's desire to give Kori tradition the support of scripture, however, should be seen in the context of the Muslim presence in the Kori's world, Islam being a "Religion of the Book". Where the Sindi does influence the Kori it is, to borrow an analogy from electricity, in parallel rather than in series. The Sindi see the strength in their written tradition to lie in its Arabic roots, while the Kori are anxious to trace their origins to Gujarati. They will claim that they speak Gujarati. This is their language, although many speak Sindhi also.

RANO AKHIYANI - I speak Sindhi. So does my wife. In fact all women do, some a little, some a lot. I also know a little Urdu.

JNY - And Gujarati?

RANO AKHIYANI - Gujarati? Are we not speaking Gujarati now? Oh, you must mean Pakka (perfect) Gujarati. Ah yes, Pakka Gujarati sounds very sweet in our ears. [14/4/81]

The Kachi dialect spoken by the Kori does not carry as official a sanction as "perfect" Gujarati does in Kori eyes. A recent survey has in fact shown that the Kori dialect can be considered a language in its own

right in linguistic terms.

The hypothesis that the Koli groups speak Gujarati (or at least a dialect of it) seems to be disproved by the results of this survey. Gujarati is only slightly closer to the Koli languages than the others (ie. Urdu, Sindhi, Saraiki, Marwari) and they cannot be regarded as dialects of Gujarati. It is likely that, with much more Koli young people becoming literate in Sindhi, Sindhi will have an increasing effect on the Koli languages (Grainger & Grainger 1981:42).

Perhaps because of this perceived threat to its identity, the Kori claim that the language which they speak is Gujarati is upheld with great vigour. The majority of the devotional hymns sung in worship by the bhagat are in a form of Gujarati which few of those listening understand (see chapter 2.4). But, rather than diminishing their effectiveness, this merely adds to their value, for they are seen to be very meritorious hymns indeed if they can only be understood by the very learned. I once read out a few verses of a hymn, which had been dictated to me by a bhagat, to Arjan. He confessed that he understood little of what it meant, but recognised the language.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - This hymn uses a special language which we call Sanskrit. Only those who know the language will be able to tell you what it means. There is a lot of Sanskrit in Hindi and Gujarati. Mind you, this hymn will have been taken from the Gita, and you will have the Gita in your own language, so why ask me? [15/5/81]

As the Muslims have Arabic, and the Christians had Latin, so the Kori have Gujarati seasoned with Sanskrit. But the word "ilim" they have borrowed from their Sindi neighbours, for its roots lie in Arabic.

The three fundamental concepts of rebirth, impurity, and knowledge will recur throughout the chapters which follow. So far they have only been briefly touched upon, as far as it has been possible to abstract them from the main body of perceptions. A fuller picture of their meaning and value will develop in the course of this study.



## CHAPTER 3: ACHIEVING A FUTURE

In Chapter 2 we discussed the reality of rebirth. In this chapter we shall look at Kori beliefs about life after death and related issues. In this field it is not unusual to find an informant making one statement and contradicting it later with another. While Sharma, in discussing this problem, concludes that "intellectual conformity is not a matter of great importance to the Hindu villager" (1978a:43), we would argue that it is the context in which the conversation has taken place which determines the amount of conformity necessary. When contradiction occurs we would presume that what is being said is of less immediate importance because of the social context in which it is spoken, or that it is not the shared reality of the group.

### SECTION 3.1: THE MECHANICS OF REBIRTH

#### I. Rebirth and Ishvar

We must begin with Ishvar, who is never far away from the voiced thoughts of the Kori villager.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - There is only the one who makes everything. This is Ishvar, or Krishna, or Isu (Jesus) - they are all one and the same. By the command of Ishvar all things are made and without his knowledge nothing can happen.

What need has He of anything? Is He not immortal? It is we who have need of things. He sees our need for a wife and gives us one. She keeps our house and cooks our food. She serves us. All that we need Krishna Bhagvan gives to us, and it is not for us to desire anything. If we desire another woman, then we do wrong. [30/9/81]

Here we find a concept of God which is not limited to the Indian Sub-continent. God is the creator and controller of the universe; the supreme deity without whose knowledge nothing can happen and by whose will all things come to pass.

JNY - Is it true that those who die in accidents become ghosts?

BHARAT PATEL - No, people just say that.

VIRAM BHIL - Is it not the will of Ishvar when a man should die?  
[5/5/82]

Ishvar is the primary reason for everything. He is the first line of conceptual defence, although it is possible to explore beyond Him without challenging His existence. We have already briefly looked at the Kori notion of rebirth. Rebirth is seen as a mechanism and Ishvar as the guiding force behind it.

HADHU VEAN - When someone dies they are reborn as an ant, or a dog, or a bird, or an animal, depending upon the life they have lived. Their reborn state is determined when they answer to Ishvar. [6/1/82]

RAMSHI VARESA - All ziv are retrieved by Ishvar, who will then decide whether they are to be given to a dog, or a goat, or a cow, or even to an ant. [28/7/81]

Most Kori would agree with Hadhu, i.e. that one's reborn state depends upon the life one has lived. There are other theories, however, which remove this possibility of human influence.

ZAVO PAJI - When the ziv goes to Bhagvan He sends it to wherever there is a shortage. If the ziv lives one life as a man then it must live one hundred lives as an animal before it can be reborn as a man again. [13/1/82]

This is typical, however, of the sort of contradictions which occur in the subjective world of the ethnographer.

SANDO ZANDARIYA - When a person dies their spirit wanders around their house until their funeral is held.

JNY - Can the spirit of someone who is recently deceased be reborn as the child of a woman who is pregnant at the time?

SANDO - I do not know. People say that this is what happens, but how can anyone know for sure? But they do say that if a man dies and a wife of his close kin is pregnant at the time then his ziv is reborn in that child. [30/4/81]

Whether a shortage, or what one deserves determines one's reborn state, it is generally accepted that one's very nature is predetermined by one's birth.

JNY - How do people become cannibals? (Cannibals were said to exist on the fringes of Kori experience.)

RAMSHI VARESA - It is the will of Ishvar. He gives us plenty to eat, does He not? So what need have we of becoming cannibals? Some He creates as cannibals, others He does not. It is His will. [28/7/81]

SATRUGA BHAGAT - The Bhangi (sweeper caste) are born human like the rest of us. But we are born as Kori, and it is our calling to be farmers and to work the land. It is the calling of the Bhangi to sweep up shit and live a life of squalor.

If I were to say to you, "Here, take these twenty rupees, and go and empty this pail of excrement outside the village for me!", would you go? But a Bhangi would do it for only one rupee. Why? Because it is the calling of the Bhangi to remove excrement. [24/5/82]

## II. Rebirth and Dharam

If one's very nature at birth is so conclusively predetermined, it would be valuable to look into what influences Ishvar's judgement on the matter at the critical stage when, after death, the ziv comes before Him. By what, then, is the ziv judged?

As was often the case, Satruga Bhagat was able to provide an elaborate and illuminating discourse on this subject.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Just as a man, when he sows seed, and weeds, and reaps, will end up with either a profit or a loss, so in our lives we do dharam or we do pap. In the end it is all added up and if there is an excess of dharam then we are reborn in sukh (pleasure), but if there is an excess of pap then we are reborn as an insect, or, worse still, in Narag (c/f Hell), where we must live out our lives and eventually, when we are reborn elsewhere, we will know better.

But there is no sukh without dukh (pain). If someone is living a life of sukh, then it is because someone else is living a life of dukh. [28/4/82]

In Sind there are several tribes of nomadic beggars, who wander their circuit from village to village. Village dogs are quick to spot their different clothing and manner, and the continuous barking of dogs is always an advance warning of their arrival at the door of your house.

Armed with iron tipped staves to keep the dogs away, they come soon after the harvests to demand that their bowls be filled with grain. They

come in pairs and work around the village from house to house. The villagers fear them as much as they dislike them, and in exchange for their handfuls of grain they buy protection from the beggars' evil (e.g. the evil eye, curse, etc. - see 4.4). Despite knowing and playing on the villagers' fears, the beggars will announce their motives to be of the purest nature. "Dharam", they cry piously, "Give for your dharam, give in the name of dharam." Such sacrificial giving illustrates the most common usage of the word.

CHALI (w/o Rano Akhiyani) - The beggars say, "Give one rupee in Ishvar's name. Give it for dharam. Give, not in my name, but in Bhagvan's (i.e. Ishvar's) name.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Dharam is a powerful word. [19/4/81]

BURO MAYANI - When the beggars come around they beg in Ishvar's name. This means that when we give to beggars they say that they will pray for us. All that we give is then written down by Ishvar, so that in the end He will know how much has been given in His name. Then we will be rewarded according to what we deserve. [20/4/81]

Dharam, however, is not solely in the control of the beggar. One evening we were sitting talking to the old ladies of our hamlet when a dog with a rotting, maggot-ridden jaw loped past. It had been in a fight some weeks previously, and was slowly dying from the wound. Dadi Zatu shouted at a boy to drive it off. It had become an object of revulsion, horrible to look at, and to be kept away at all costs.

MALI (d/o Lakshman Adi'hra) - Don't do that, Dadi! Do you not feed it for your dharam?

DADI ZATU - (Guiltily) How could it eat rotlo? I have tried to feed it but it cannot eat.

MALI - Then you should cook up some wheat pudding for it.

DADI ZATU - (exasperated) Listen! I spend that much time just feeding the other dogs. I gave JNY's dog two rotlo only this evening.

MALI - You are a woman of great dharam, Dadi.

DADI ZATU - (pleased) I care not whether it is for dharam.

MALI - It is good for your dharam to feed dogs. [13/5/82]

MAMA SAHADEVA - When you leave out a pot for animals and birds

to drink from, it is a matter of dharam.

DADI ZATI - Yes, yes, it is a matter of dharam. When you see some stranger in a state of thirst, and you give him something to drink, then he will say, "May thou be blessed." Or if you give a hungry stranger food, he will say, "May thou be blessed."

NANI - You can feed dogs.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Yes, sometimes when a dog has given birth it is fed wheat pudding and rice.

DADI ZATI - When Devi Dah (a local spiritual leader) was here staying at Satruga's, a village dog gave birth in the morning. He had some pudding cooked and fed it to her. It is true! I saw him do it with my own eyes.

MAMA SAHADEVA - And when dogs come near us WE chase them off. [27/7/81]

Dharam, then, can be gained from generosity to the less fortunate. The following example illustrates, however, that there are two sides to an act of dharam. On a hot summer day we were sitting in the shade of a tree, the ripened fruit of which was a delicacy in Sind. A Bhil girl from the village came and stood insolently and obviously nearby. Rani, daughter of Ramshi Varesa to whom the fruit rightfully belonged, wished to shoo her away, declaring that she came in this way every day. But Zomi, her mother, muttered about their dharam, and threw some fruit over to the girl who scampered off with it.

Here we see the two diverse motives for generosity. To give incurs dharam, but to refuse to give would incur the danger of the evil eye. As Satruga Bhagat said, there is no sukh without dukh. There is no pleasure without pain. But whether the fruit was given for dharam or to avoid the evil eye, there is no room here for altruism. In both cases it would have been the giver who would benefit from the act.

Dharam can be gained not just from generosity to the less fortunate, but from generosity to everyone.

NANI - I shall tell you what dharam is. It is this: You are my banez (ZS), your mama (MB) is my son. I would never take any money from you, or from Mama (Sahadeva), or from Arjan, or from Lakshman.

JNY - So dharam is when you do not accept money?

NANI - Yes. If our house ever makes wheat pudding, or any sweetmeats, then we always share it with you all. That is dharam. [19/4/81]



It is not merely through the giving of material objects that dharam is gained, however. Abstinence is a closely related method. Abstinence, for example, during an eclipse of the sun.

DADI ZATU - The bhagat say that we should not eat while the eclipse (geny) has control, for why should we be happy when the sun is in trouble?

At the time of Nilo's wedding the sun was red for a long time. From there (she indicated about eleven a.m.) to there (about two p.m.). All that time we did not eat a thing, but instead threw grain to the birds, crying, "Come out! Come out! Let go! Let go!" We fed the dogs and other animals also. Eventually the sun came out again.

The bhagat say it is a matter of dharam if you abstain from food and other such pleasures when the sun is in trouble. After it has come out again you should sprinkle the houses with water, wash your clothes, and have a bath. There is usually some sweet offering made also. This morning, however, most of the women were out in the fields having their morning shit and didn't even know that there was an eclipse. [3/7/81]

The relating of dharam to sacrifice and suffering is done explicitly in the following conversation where Ramzi is talking about the exploits of his father-in-law, Lakshman Bhagat.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - The Muslims do not fast properly. They have a big feast at four in the morning, and again in the evening. The only thing they do which is of merit is to refuse to drink water. They let nothing pass their lips. They do not even spit.

But The Bhagat. (i.e. Lakshman) fasts properly. You will already be aware that he holds a Bhao (spiritual feast - see 3.4) every year on Atham, the day after the festival of Hachmo (see 5.4). For the three months which precede this event he eats only one meal a day, at midday. For the final ten days, he eats nothing at all. He will drink water or tea, but that is all.

Then, on the night of the feast, when all the guest bhagat have been fed, and all the villagers have feasted, he will ask his guru's permission and only then will he eat. He does this for dharam, the dharam of suffering. As he suffers, so his dharam increases. [8/5/82]

### III. Pap

We shall now turn to look at the concept of pap, the meaning of which is linked to that of dharam.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - I will explain. There are only four pap. The

greatest pap is the one committed against your daughters, if you give them abuse or treat them badly. For what can your daughters do? (i.e. who can they turn to?). They are YOUR daughters, after all.

Secondly, you must not abuse or trouble the sadhu (ascetic). Thirdly, there is the Brahman, and, finally, the cow. If you treat cows well you are doing great dharam.

Just as these four are the source of pap, so they are the source of dharam. If you perform acts of kindness and generosity towards them your dharam will be great and when you die you will go straight to the place of the saints (Amarpur). But if you trouble and torment them, then your pap will be great. [24/5/82]

While these four categories, as recipients of charity, are common to India in general, judging from the pronouncements made by Satruga in other, less dogmatic moods, they are not the only vehicles of pap and dharam, if perhaps they are the most important to him. Nevertheless, the opposition is plain to see: being kind and generous is set against troubling and tormenting. The equation, however, has further dimensions.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Ishvar says:

There is no pap like falsehood.  
There is no dharam like truth.

The greatest pap of all is to be false. [24/5/82]

Satruga was not the only Kori to hold these views. Indeed they were widely expressed, although the avoidance of such a pap was seldom very marked in practice.

RAMSHI VARESA - Lying is pap. When you borrow one hundred rupees from a man and say you will pay it back but have no intention of doing so, that is falsehood and is pap. [23/4/81]

A pap appears to be an action which causes suffering.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Pap is falsehood. It is to deceive, to torment, to make trouble for others. Pap is to lie. [28/4/82]

To cause any sort of suffering is pap. This is stretched even to the waking of someone from sleep, something which Kori are always hesitant to do.

RAMSHI VARESA - It is a pap to wake someone who is sleeping. He will be angry for you will have woken him from his dreams. [23/4/81]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - If a man is sleeping he must be in need of sleep. Therefore, if he is woken distress will have been caused him. Would this not then be a pap? [23/12/81]

Inevitably, to kill a living creature is to do pap.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - A man is judged by his pap. If you take a life, that is a pap. Or if you deceive someone it is often worse, depending on the nature of the deceit. ... If someone were to entrust you with money, and when he came back to you for it you were to say that you did not know what he was talking about, then that is equal to killing your own son. Pap is to kill. [14/5/82]

We have seen the dharam which can be gained from abstaining from pleasure during an eclipse. Unsurprisingly, there is the danger of incurring pap here also. Nilo Paji once attempted to recall and explain the theory behind the eclipse.

NILO PAJI - I do not really know much about it, but it was something about the sun taking upon himself the debts of the Bhangji (sweeper), the Bhangji being in debt to someone else. Either that, or else the sun was taking upon himself someone else's debt to the Bhangji.

Nevertheless, if you eat during an eclipse you do pap. [31/7/81]

Where dharam is gained through an identification with the suffering of the sun, pap results from an unwillingness to so identify. Pap, then, can be incurred through inaction as much as through action.

A child one day reported to Dadi Zati that a cat had had its tail burned.

DADI ZATI - Whoever did it will have to stand alone and face Ishvar. This act has nothing whatsoever to do with me. For the pap of the cat is the greatest. It is greater than the pap of any other animal, even the cow.

Once a Vaniya threw a stick at a cat and, by accident, it struck its head and killed it. Immediately everyone was distraught with worry. Much money was spent in acts of dharam, and much food was cooked and distributed. The Vaniya himself just sat and cried, saying that he was finished. For had he not killed a cat? [31/1/82]

The Kori acknowledge the inevitability of incurring pap, but they also know formulae whereby pap can be countered.

RANO AKHIYANI - If you kill an animal, bird, insect, plant, tree,

or anything with breath, then that is a pap.

JNY - How then can pap be avoided?

RANO - You cannot avoid pap, but you can counterbalance it with acts of dharam. If, for example, every morning you were to light incense and contemplate Him (i.e. Ishvar); or if you were to spend money on sweets which you distributed every day; that is dharam. When you die your dharam will be measured against your pap. [27/1/82]

Here Rano has summed up a fundamental precept of Kori belief. Pap is unavoidable, and therefore acts of dharam to counter it are vital. And all that happens is measured and recorded in files of righteousness and of iniquity, which are reserved until the day of judgement when they are weighed to see which is the heavier.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - There are two types of person, the Thamoguni and the Sathoguni. The Thamoguni are of suffering. They give suffering to others, and as a result the shadows of their actions strike them and so they live in suffering also. They are the kind of people who, if asked for food by a beggar, would shout, "Leave me alone! What would I have to do with the likes of You?"

The Sathoguni are of contentment. They would reply, "Take all that you need." And, because of this, they live in contentment. The Thamoguni kill and eat, and the shadow of their actions strikes them as they eat. [28/4/82]

The unambiguous way in which suicide is categorised re-emphasises this connection between pap and suffering inflicted.

JNY - Are those who have committed suicide buried in the conventional way? Have they not done pap?

SHAVO BHOPA - How can they have done pap? The only hurt they have done is to themselves. Yes, they are buried in the conventional way. [7/10/81]

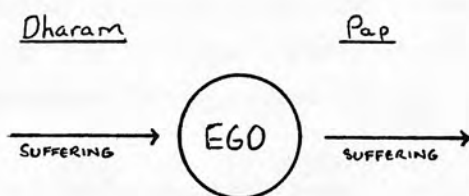
Pap and dharam are inextricably bound up with lifestyle and situation.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - It is our duty to do two things: work and worship. It is our duty to feed our children. That is dharam. To give them sweet rice and wheat pudding so they will thank us. dharam is not necessarily to give a large feast. Whether we spend five thousand rupees or five rupees on such offerings, it is all the same in the eyes of Ishvar. We must gather fodder for our animals. That is dharam. We must feed our leftover rotlo to the dogs, for they cannot eat grass. It is Ishvar's command that we do this. We should feed the birds. Then they will sing our praises and Ishvar will hear. That is our dharam.

In the end it will all be written down and presented to Ishvar. Just as when there is a case brought to the court. It is shown that we have done this, and this, and this. [30/9/81]

All the major religious doctrines known to the Kori are recognised as being "dharam". There is the Sanatan (Hindu) Dharam, the Muslim Dharam, and the Christian Dharam. These present a variety of formulae by which dharam can be achieved and pap negated.

To sum up, we can say that an act of pap is an act which causes suffering either directly or through complacency in the face of it. An act of dharam is an act of sacrifice or suffering on the part of the individual, or one which eases the suffering of another life form in a world of rebirths.



The relation of this opposition to the concept of rebirth has already been hinted at and is fairly straightforward.

JNY - Is it possible for a Bhangi to be reborn into a higher caste?

HADHU VEAN - That will depend upon his earnings. It will depend upon the condition of his heart. It will matter not whether he is a sweeper or of a high caste. When Ishvar examines his heart then, depending upon what he has earned, he will be reborn either higher or lower. [5/3/82]

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - If a man leads a life of dharam then, when he dies, his ziv will go before the dharam Raza (ruler). Ishvar has a book just like the one you are writing in, in which are written all the good and bad deeds done in the ziv's past life. This determines where the ziv will be reborn, and as what. If it has had a life of dharam then it will be reborn in a condition of pleasure, a condition of sukh as opposed to dukh. Sukh means a



life of ease, where you have no hard work and will not want for anything. Dukh means hardship and poverty. Rebirth into sukh means into a high caste. [22/2/82]

We have already seen how Zavo Paji's ideas are not in total agreement with this theory (3.1.I), although his general gist is the same. The formula applies to high caste as well as low, and to men and women alike.

JNY - Which are lower, men or women?

HADHU VEAN - Women are lower. If a woman leads a life of dharam then she may be reborn as a man. But a man can only be reborn as a woman if he is of pap. It all depends upon what you earn. [7/6/82]

#### IV. Life After Death

Rebirth into a higher or a lower existence is not the only possibility which presents itself at death. The conditions of sukh and duk are made tangible in the existence of Narag and of Amarpur, or Surgpur.

RANO AKHIYANI - Narag, or the dirty water, so the bhagat say, is where you go to when you have lived a bad life. Your ziv comes before Ishvar and He judges you. If you have been wicked your ziv is thrown into the dirty water. This is a river of sewage, full of shit like the ones you see in the towns. There your circumstance is terrible. You go under and come up again, and you swallow the filth. [27/1/82]

One's stay in Narag is not an eternal one.

JNY - Once in Narag, can you escape?

SANDO ZANDARIYA - Of course you can. It is up to Bhagvan whether or not he lets you be reborn elsewhere. [30/4/82]

This delay between death and rebirth, where time is spent in "Hell", is echoed in other Indian ethnographies (e.g. Pocock 1973:37, Freed & Freed 1980:525). Quayle (1980:103), studying the concept of death as a ritual journey in Kumaon, argues that such a journey is necessary for the restoration of balance in the society where the death has occurred, and the renewal of the soul.

We have been given a very real visual image of Narag, but what of Surgpur/Amarpur?

RAMZI MAHALEYO - In Amarpur there is no more death and rebirth.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - It is where the people go who have achieved release (mugti). There they exist, above even Ishvar. [19/5/82]

The Kori usage of this concept is, however, ambiguous. Gone to "Surg" is often used as a euphemism for being reborn. On a couple of occasions I was shown a religious picture belonging to Lakshman Bhagat's wife, Jari, which graphically illustrated many of the Koris' notions of the relationship between present and future life.

Ramzi was asking me to take a picture of his family and, in a moment of inspiration, asked Jari to fetch her picture so that I may be given some idea of the kind of composition he had in mind. This request created no small amount of excitement and amusement, and we all went over to Jari's house to have a look.

Printed at the foot was the title "Karni Barni" : "What is done must be borne", and this was the underlying theme of the many illustrations on the page. They were in fact illustrations of people doing something in one life and receiving their just deserts in the next. Although painted in the style of the many religious pictures found in the houses of Hindus, I could not help but notice that, apart from the overall message conveyed, two underlying themes predominated. These were the themes of nudity and blood-letting, or, in other words, sex and violence.

Framed in the centre of the page was a blue skinned god seated on a throne. This, I was told, was Lord Krishna. On his right sat a record keeper, the Dharam Raza, and in front of him were the scales on which he weighed the good and bad deeds written in the book in his lap. To the left of Lord Krishna stood a ferocious demon wielding a spiked club. And in the fore-ground stood the man and the woman whose dharam were being measured.

Surrounding this frame were pairs of smaller frames entitled "The fruit of ...", the fruit of various misdeeds being various punishments. Here and there was a correlation between the misdeed and its punishment. The man who cuts the throat of a goat is, in the following frame, being sawn in half, naked, by two demons. The picture of the adulterous couple, lying in sin overhangs one of the same couple in the flaming fire. The woman is being unceremoniously pulled onto a flaming pillar by a grinning demon, and the man, for want of something more apt, is being speared in the chest by another. The man driving the oxcart which has been cruelly overloaded with sacks of grain, is seen in the next frame with his wife and himself yoked to the cart of a demon.

All the frames show the wrongdoers naked, the men being allowed loincloths but the women having to do without. Where there is no appropriate punishment the artist appears to have improvised. The cheating shopkeeper finds himself tied to a tree with a vicious trident buried deep in his stomach. The moneylender finds himself being dismembered by a demon with an evilly curved sword. The robber spends his next life being ground head first in an oil press, blood flowing freely. Two men who indulge in drinking and smoking find themselves being eaten alive by sea monsters. An indecently dressed woman who, as was explained, was taking medicine so as to abort her child, finds herself naked, and

being impaled on a demon's spear.

Finally, beneath the central frame were three figures struggling in deep water. A man is drowning, a woman is being chased by a sea snake, but the third, a woman, is being towed along in safety, her hand clutching the tail of a cow. Lakshman Bhagat explained that this was the Vethani river, where all ziv go to upon death. If they have lead a life of dharam, they can escape, as in the case of the woman with the cow. If not they perish. [8/5/81]

The picture had been printed and produced by "Jain Pictures Ltd.", Bombay. If I have been light hearted in my description of it, I have intended to reflect the general feelings expressed by fellow villagers. But, despite their amusement, everyone was impressed by what was displayed. Jari especially by the man being sawn in half, and the naked woman being impaled on the spear.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Since seeing what happened to the man driving the oxen, I have given up driving oxen myself.. No longer will I plough fields, nor drive a cart. For, if I do, look at the fate that awaits me.

JARI - But surely it is the work of the tenant to drive the oxen. What choice does he have? [8/5/82]

There appear to be a range of possibilities which exist for the Kori after death. There are the idealised situations represented in the above illustration and by the words "Narag" and "Amarpur", and there are the very real situations of the more or less fortunate existences in the world in which the Kori live and work.

BHARAT PATEL - When we die we are reborn in a different incarnation. This rebirth will depend on our earnings in our previous life. We are reborn either in dukh, e.g. as a dog or an animal, or in sukh, e.g. like you, who can ride in an aeroplane or have a car if you wish. We say that people can go to Narag or to Surgpur, but it is possible for such states to be realised in this world. Look at the dog! Always hungry. Is that not Narag as far as it is concerned? And there are those people who possess all that they need. Are they not in Surgpur? [5/5/82]

(A similar belief is articulated by the Arya Samaj, a North Indian sect - see Freed & Freed 1980:540.)

## V. The Cosmic Mechanism

It is not the exact situation which relates to a previous life which is of importance in Kori belief, but the mechanism which controls the possibilities, and the principles which govern it. What is recognised is a mechanism of moral, spiritual, material, and cosmological balance. It is possible to manipulate this mechanism for one's own future benefit by leading a life of dharam in the present.

Manipulation of the mechanism is possible, but where does this leave Ishvar?

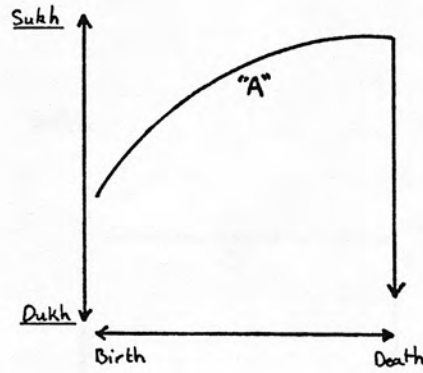
SATRUGA BHAGAT - Ishvar has no say in the matter. An act of pap, or an act of dharam, is like the report drawn up by the magistrate. If I commit a theft, and am taken off to jail by the magistrate, he will then write a report on the incident, and that will be his duty done. Once committed to paper the report cannot be changed. [24/5/82]

Ishvar, then, remains aloof from the mechanism of balance. This is perhaps most concisely illustrated in the following statement. An argument was taking place between Ramshi Varesa and Shavo Bhopa, with Ramshi opting to defend the Christian concept of forgiveness.

SHAVO BHOPA - How can a pap be forgiven? Even Ishvar could never forgive a pap. This is why acts of dharam are essential. Without them a man is stuck in his pap. [23/2/82]

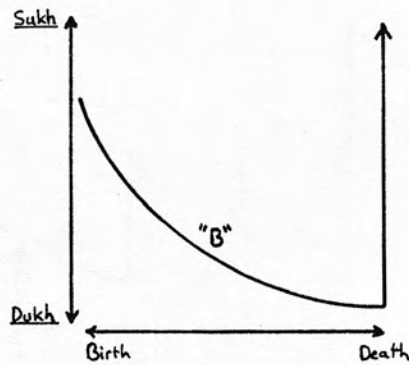
Similar views are found elsewhere in India (e.g. Freed & Freed 1980:536), and are summed up in the doctrine of Karma which Sharma (1978a) discusses as a possible cultural resolution to the problem of suffering - suffering being explained by misdeeds past lives. Van der Veen (1972:215), in a different light, sees Karma as the means which enables Hindus to deny dependence on God and control their own destiny.

We can now gather together diagrammatically all that has been said on the subjects of pap, dharam, and rebirth. Firstly, let us look at a life of pap. That is, a life of pleasure and gain through the suffering and loss of others.



Line "A" represents the circumstance of the individual. During his/her life s/he strives for sukh, but, as a result, after death, s/he is plunged into dukh.

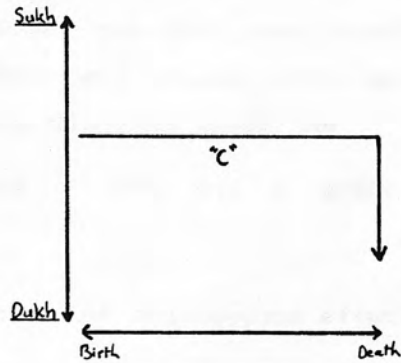
Let us now look at a life of dharam. That is, a life of suffering and of relieving the sufferings of others.



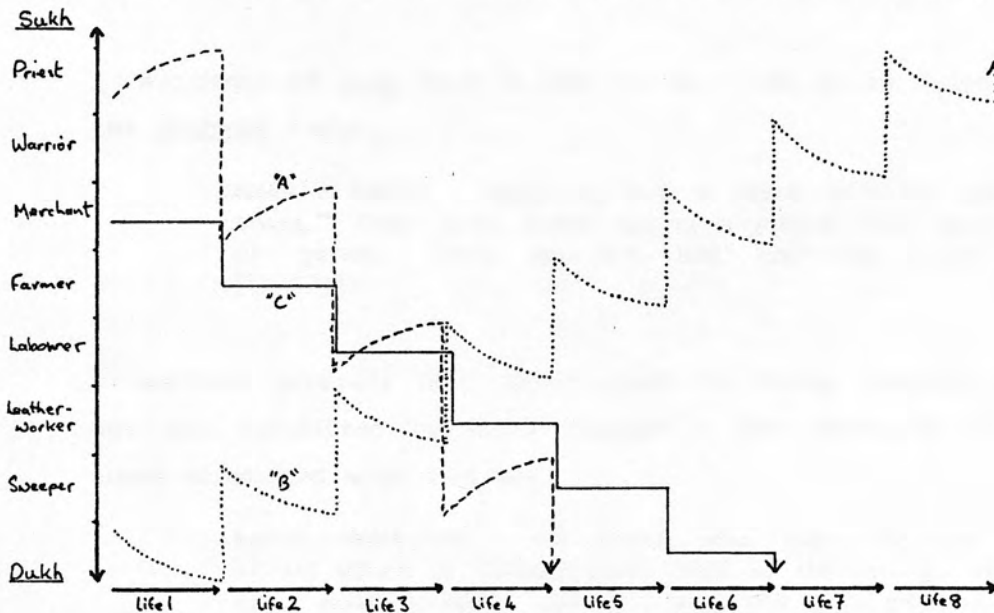
Line "B" represents the circumstance of the individual, who during his/her life endures dukh, but, as a result, after death is raised into sukh.

Obviously the reborn state is related to the acuteness of the shortage of dharam or of paap in the previous life. Finally, therefore, we will look at a life which is without paap, but is also without dharam. The catch here is that inaction in the face of suffering is itself paap. There is no neutral way out for those who wish to shirk their cosmic responsibilities.





The ongoing circumstances of ziv "A", "B", and "C" can be shown together on a chart which spans many lifetimes and many rebirths, and which incorporates the hierarchy into which rebirth takes place.



## VI. Further Attributes of Pap and Dharam

One aspect of the pap/dharam/rebirth equation will require some further elaboration if a more complete understanding of its mechanism is to be achieved. This is that which has already been touched upon, and which is an integral part of Hinduism in general, namely, the doctrine of non-violence.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - pap is committed when a ziv is "taken". When something is killed, whether it is a fellow human or the smallest of insects, then that is a pap. [22/2/82]

This statement represents a widely held and often voiced Kori belief. One January night we sat around the fire at Ramshi Varesa's house. Nila, one of his daughters, noticed that one of the burning logs was crawling with ants. She mentioned the fact, and immediately her father ordered that it be pulled clear and doused with water. For a moment the implications of what had happened shook him.

RAMSHI VARESA - This was a great pap. An immense pap. [27/1/82]

Inevitably, the doctrine of non-violence effects commensality.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - The eating of meat which has been killed by your own hand is pap. Animals, you see, have ziv just as we do. Although we are human and they are animals, our ziv and theirs are the same. If someone was to cut your throat you would suffer, would you not? Similarly, if you were to cut the throat of an animal it suffers dukh, and you will have done pap. [8/5/82]

Avoidance of papi food is seen to be taken to an extreme by those of the Brahman caste.

BHARAT PATEL - Brahman are a caste who do not let pap near them. They even avoid eating anything red, such as red onions or garlic. They do not eat anything which has breathed. [13/6/81]

Another generally held belief which is closely related, is that pap is not just committed by those involved in the taking of life, but also by those associated with this act.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - All those who share in the eating of the animal which is killed, share also in its killing, be it by a large or a small amount. In this way the pap of the killing is borne by more than just the one who has killed. [8/5/82]

RAMSHI VARESA - When a man kills a goat and then feeds others, then he gives them half the pap of his deed. If you were to kill a goat and then feed it to me and my family, then we would eat it and enjoy it. By doing this we would take on some of the pap of its killing. In the same way, when we buy goat meat from the butcher in Tande, we accept the pap of the butcher, and his own pap is lessened. [23/4/81]

Seen in this light, a pap once committed takes on an almost physical quality. It can be shared and has to be avoided. bhagat, for example, are vegetarian, and keep their dishes separate from those eating meat at

communal meals.

BAPU AGISANI - They keep them separate, but only when meat is being eaten. Their bowl and their rotlo remain separate for the duration of the meal. [30/4/82]

JNY - When vegetarians keep their plates separate, what are they avoiding?

ZAVO PAJI - They are avoiding only that which they do not like. After meat has been eaten from a plate it can be washed and vegetables served them in it. They will not mind that. [25/5/82]

An attractive notion worth considering is that pap have both moral and physical attributes in the Kori world where the spiritual and material realms are indistinct. McGilvray (1982b:55) comments upon the fact that in Sri Lanka pollution overlaps from the physical into the area of moral and spiritual defect. Pocock (1973:130) also states that in Gujarat impure foods are seen to bring about spiritual damage. In Himachal Pradesh Phillimore (1980:124) sees a connection between the physical food consumed by the Brahman during the death rites of the Raja, and the Raja's sin. He argues that the Brahman becomes impure by being made a human scapegoat for the Raja's moral defects. Parry (1980:89) describes the Mahabrahman subcaste in Kashi playing a similar role, although he differentiates between their spiritual impurity and the physical impurity of the low castes. Pap could be seen by the Kori as being synonymous with impurity, abaral, in a world where the pure/impure opposition has implications for the social and the spiritual state.

On further examination, however, we find that the relationship between sin and impurity, between pap and abaral, is a more complex one. The following, for example, is what Satruga Bhagat had to say on the matter.

JNY - Does the fact that you are a bhagat mean that your dishes must be kept separate from those of meat eaters? And is this done to avoid pap?

SATRUGA BHAGAT - My plates must be kept separate. But not because I wish to avoid their pap. Meat eaters, you see, are not committing pap, they are becoming debtors. If you kill in this life, then in your reborn state you are bound to be so killed. You may, for example, be reborn as a goat or a chicken. And those who share in the meat also share in the debt and will have to repay it in a later life. Be it a large or a small amount, that amount will have to be repayed.

JNY - And if you share their plates, do you share their debts

also?

SATRUGA - No. But as a tree has shade in which the light of the sun is diminished, so I would be effected by their actions. [28/4/82]

In most matters Satruga Bhagat had an inclination to differ from the commonly held view. His conversation was often highly irritating, especially so, as he enjoyed talking. Many of his words were directed subtly against those whom he considered to be his rivals in philosophy, the more notable of these rivals being Dasrath Shekhani and his own younger brother, Lakshman Bhagat. Nevertheless, in this case he echoed the degree of vagueness which surrounded the topic in the voiced opinions of any but the most unimaginative Kori.

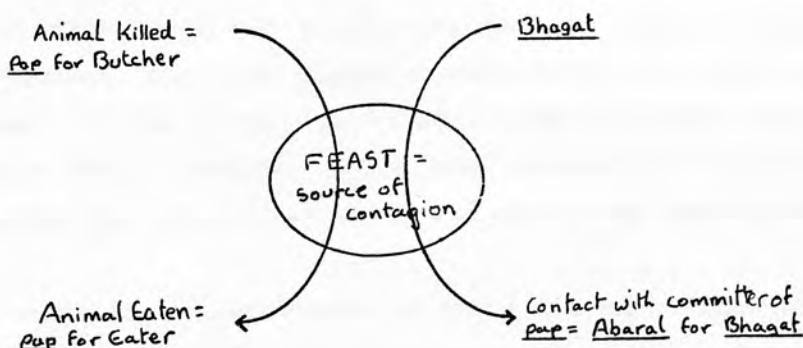
JNY - Why do bhagat keep their plates separate?

KARAM MAYANI - They do not keep their plates separate unless meat is being eaten. Then, because they are vegetarian, they ask for separate rotlo platters and food dishes. This is so they won't be made abaral by the pap of the killing.

JNY - Does this mean that if you do pap then you become abaral?

KARAM - No. You do not become abaral by eating meat of an animal which has been killed. But an animal which has died (i.e. has not been properly butchered) is abaral, and you become abaral by eating or even touching it. [9/6/82]

According to Karam some connections can be made. These can be illustrated diagrammatically as follows.



In the opinions of others, however, meat is even doubted as a source of pap.

JNY - When people eat meat, are they sharing in the pap of

the killing?

BAPU AGISANI - Certainly not! The one who has killed commits the pap, not those who eat the meat. Whoever does the deed must pay the price. [30/4/82]

On one occasion at least Satruga was in agreement here.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - It is not a pap to eat meat or fish, it is a bhadalo. Bhadalo are acts which, if inflicted on others by you, will be inflicted on you by others in a future life. [24/5/82]

A final indication of the complexity of meaning in these concepts can be seen if rebirth is studied. If pap were synonymous with abara, it would accumulate among the lower castes, thus making their rebirth into a higher caste more difficult. But this is not the case, however, and this issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

In conclusion we can see that, whereas abara is not synonymous with pap, pap can definitely contribute to abara. Take the following example.

JNY - Why does Netha always borrow our knife when a chicken is to be killed?

MALI (w/o Arjan Adi'hra) - Typical! Never lend anyone your knife without first asking what it is going to be used for. If they borrowed our knife, and returned it covered in blood, we would not let them use it again.

DADI ZATU - It is because Netha does not eat chicken herself. She wishes to keep her own knife free from the abara of the blood so that its smell does not ruin her food. [7/6/82]

The results of this pap, then, are abara. A knife is made impure with the blood of its victim. In a similar way the inverse of this holds. Acts of purification from abara are a necessary part of acts of dharam. The more purity involved, the more dharam manufactured. We have seen that a necessary part of the dharam performed during and after an eclipse is having a ritual bath. Similarly, after the pollution of birth, acts of dharam accompany the ritual cleansing of the house and the mother.

We shall return to an exploration of these themes in Chapter 7, when a wider examination of forces of motivation may help our understanding of these complex issues.



## SECTION 3.2: TRUTH AS RECEIVED FROM ISHVAR

We have mentioned already that the Kori acknowledge different ways of achieving dharam (e.g. Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, etc.). Their acceptance of these different methods, or "Paths", rests on their belief that knowledge of them originates from Ishvar, and is therefore true. As Ahmad has rightly said, Hinduism is a search for truth, (Ahmad 1964:76), and truth is verified by Ishvar. In this truth lies hope for humankind.

The following is an account of the moments of death of Netha's baby daughter, as witnessed by the ethnographer.

As the baby gradually became weaker people came in from the village to sit, the menfolk on beds and the womenfolk around Netha. Pansa Zandariya fetched some medicine of his own, which had been prescribed him by a doctor and not completely used up, in the hope that it might be of some good. A spoonful was poured down the baby's throat, but to no avail.

Suddenly Netha, in whose lap the baby was lying, began to wail. The men crowded around. Jari took the child and told Netha to hush. Lakshman Bhagat and Bharat Patel began to call out the names "Ishvar", and "Bhagvan" repeatedly.

Eventually the baby died. Bharat passed his hand over her face saying, "Now she has left her mother and father. Now she has left her home..." The women began to wail, and the men also shed a few tears as, one by one, we moved from the beds and sat down on the mats which had been placed nearby.

"Do not cry anymore!" said Bharat, "The time for crying is past. We should give for dharam, taking Ishvar's name, and remember to follow the straight path of his teaching. Follow the true path." [20/6/81]

### I. Direct Revelation of truth

How does Ishvar communicate truth? The Kori appear to recognise two chief modes of communication. There is, firstly, direct revelation, as in the case of Ishvar's incarnations.

BURO MAYANI - It was Ishvar who sent the saints/heroes and the gods to help us. There are as many Ishvar as there are peoples. How many does that make? It comes to a person in a dream that they are an incarnation (avtari), and when they awake they tell others to have faith in them. [23/10/81]

Such was the case with Saman Sarkar, whose annual fair drew crowds by the busload from surrounding towns.

PANSA AKHIYANI - Saman Sarkar spoke the truth, and so we follow him. [17/10/81]

Yet as Buro points out, although he was followed as a teacher in his lifetime, it took a dream for him to be followed after his death.

BURO MAYANI - Saman Sarkar was a man who was close to Ishvar. When he died there was a man who was a mowali (addicted to pleasures - see 4.2), called Kabool. Kabool dreamt one night that Saman Sarkar came to him and asked him to build a tomb so that he might be remembered and serve the living. The mowali awoke, and immediately set about collecting money. People gave generously and a shrine was built over the spot where Saman Sarkar was buried.

Now a fair is held there every year and Saman Sarkar is greatly honoured. Lots of cannabis is smoked and male chickens are offered at his grave so that he may grant boons. He was a holy man, and so people have faith in him. [19/10/81]

## II. Indirect Revelation of Truth

The second chief mode of revelation is through writing. There is, for example, the ilim of those who study the stars.

BHARAT PATEL - Pandit are people who can read the astrological charts (almanacs). These charts are those in which a man can see his future. Whether it be good or bad, these charts will tell you everything.

JNY - Who makes these charts?

BHARAT PATEL - (There followed a lengthy description of the process whereby Ishvar reveals the contents of the charts to learned Pandits who write them down and make copies.) One is brought here every year from India. Once its time has finished, it itself is finished and it cannot be used again. [13/6/81]

Whereas the astrological charts are tied to their year of origin, the Hindu scriptures themselves are timeless and have the greater power. The Gita, for example.

BHARAT PATEL - The Gita is from Bhagvan. Its words are drawn from Bhagvan's skin. If you keep a Gita in your house then no ghost can come near it. Nor should any impure thing such as a dog, or a cat, or an object from a graveyard. [5/5/82]

Bhagvan's (Ishvar's) truth, then, is written in the Gita, and this truth is illustrated here in Bharat's mutually exclusive opposition of the physically (and morally) pure and the impure.

And what of the scriptures recognised by paths other than Hindu?

BHARAT PATEL - The Muslims have the Koran, and we have the Gita. [5/5/82]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - The Gita is like the Bible. The same matters are contained therein, with very little difference. ... The Sindi say that both the Koran and the Gita are the words of Ishvar. [2/5/81]

The Gita is not the only recognised Hindu scripture.

MANZI BHAGAYO - As far as I know there are four Hindu scriptures. These are the Kalayan, the Mahabharat, the one which tells of Rama, and one other. My guru taught me of the four Ved (Vedas) : the Sathar Ved, the Sharm Ved, and I have forgotten the other two. [15/3/82]

Of the Hindu scriptures the Gita is mentioned the most often, so much so that the word "Gita" is synonymous with "Hindu Scripture" in its usage. We have already come accross the belief that the Gita cannot be approached by objects which are impure. Its antipathy with untruth is demonstrated in a far more direct manner, however.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - The Gita is very powerful and cannot be defiled. This I know as certainty. If a man tells a lie on the Gita he will suffer for it. The Gita is a foolproof way of telling lies from truth. [15/5/81]

Hear Arjan was referring to cases where accused liars were asked to swear oaths on the Gita to prove their innocence. Other scriptures were also attributed with such power.

In the hot season of 1981 Dadi Zati had some money stolen. It was her life savings, earned from renting the fields she owned, and had been taken from the quilts where she had hidden it. It was thought that Vershi Adi'hra was the culprit, for only a member of the household could have known where the money was hidden. But Nilo would not admit to anything. The following conversation took place round about this time.

RAMSHI VARESA - I think Arjan and Lakshman should both go on the moterbike to see this fellow at Tando Mari.

JNY - What fellow?

RAMSHI - A man of ilim. He will be able to name the thief. He does this by looking in the scriptures. He is a Sindi, and by reading the Koran he will be able to discover who the thief is. Then we will be able to make the thief repay the stolen money.

MASHI VIHI (Buro Mayani's stepmother) - Yes, do you remember the time there was a radio stolen. I sent Buro to see such a man as this, and he told us all about our family, and who the thief was. By then, of course, the radio had been sold, but the relatives paid two hundred rupees in compensation. [8/5/81]

I later was told the fuller story of this incident.

DADI ZATI - Ranchi, who lives in Mule, had a radio. Once, when he was sleeping, his brother's son stole it and brought it to Buro (Mayani). "Where is my radio?", demanded Ranchi when he awoke. "It cannot have flown away, so somebody must have taken it."

Ranchi went off and saw the Sindi who looked in his Koran. The Sindi was able to describe the thief - that he had many sisters, that he had a stepmother, and so on. From this description Ranchi identified Buro, and so he demanded his radio back.

Buro denied stealing it, so his landlord was brought in and beat the truth out of him. By this time the radio had been sold. Buro's stepmother paid Ranchi two hundred rupees to satisfy him. [10/5/81]

Several days later, Lakshman Adi'hra went with a relative to see this man of ilim who read the Koran. The atmosphere in the hamlet grew tense as we awaited their return. They came back with no description which fitted anyone very well. When we left Sirah the culprit still had not been found (see also 4.4).

The Gita is also an instrument which can bring about material well-being. Satruga bhagat used to read his aloud every day as he sat in his fields. I asked Manzi why.

MANZI BHAGAYO - If it is the Gita that is read, then it will be done for blessing for the crops. [13/3/82]

### III. Access to Knowledge

The scriptures are a means whereby Ishvar communicates His truth. The ability to read them, therefore, becomes a means of access to truth, and thus to spirituality.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - If you wish to know about dharam you should read the Gita.

JNY - Have you read it yourself?

ARJAN - No, never.

JNY - Do the Hindus in Sind rely on a guru?

ARJAN - Yes, there is a dependence upon a guru, but there are no true guru here. There are merely bhagat, most of whom are illiterate. Dharmu Bhagat, and a certain Kariya (iron-smith) bhagat are the only two around here who know anything.

JNY - What about Bhima Bhagat? (Bhima lived nearby and had a large local following.)

ARJAN - Bhima? He is just the same as the rest. He knows nothing. [16/4/81]

One cannot just pick up the scriptures and read from them. Reading them is itself an act of dharam, and various preparations should be made.

MANZI BHAGAYO - Before you read the Gita you must first bathe. If you do not do this then your pat (recitation) will be worthless.

JNY - For what reason?

MANZI - Because you would be dirty, and the pat cannot be achieved through impurity. [15/3/82]

Lakshman Bhagat offered hospitality for several months to a fellow bhagat, in return for which his sons were given reading lessons. We never discovered his actual name, as the whole village referred to him as the "one from Kunri". (Kunri lies in the south-eastern part of Sind.) This bhagat, a tailor by profession, was very well read. He remained with Lakshman until eventually a quarrel with Nilo, their neighbour, forced his departure. Despite his overt piety, most villagers regarded him with suspicion, being wary of his intentions.

On one occasion I had dropped in on Lakshman's hamlet, and asked to see the scriptures of which the Kunri Bhagat so often spoke.



Both Lakshman Bhagat and the Kunri Bhagat were like schoolboy enthusiasts, bringing out their numerous pamphlets to show me. There were booklets in the Sindhi and Gujarati scripts and books of Sindhi and Gujarati hymns also. Their chief possession, however was the Mahabharat itself.

Before we were to read from the Mahabharat, the Kunri Bhagat spread a rich quilt on the floor and lit some incense. The book itself, old and heavy, and bound up in an embroidered cloth, was reverently unbound and placed upon a wooden bookstand in the centre of the quilt. Lakshman Bhagat offered to let me read from it, but I declined, confessing that my own knowledge of the Gujarati script in which it was written was patchy.

So it was Lakshman himself who read from it, slowly and ponderously, enthralled with his very action. He stumbled along, stopping every now and then to clear up a point of meaning with the Kunri Bhagat, while the rest of us sat listening. Lakshman read two or three pages, by which time most of those listening had wandered off, their concentration in tatters. [22/4/81]

#### IV. The Shalok

The shalok, the couplet, is the mechanism whereby the mysteries of scripture are made accessible to the common villager.

Karna Bhagat, from the nearby Hanganvi village, was a guest in the home of Lakshman Bhagat. I popped around to pay my respects. My arrival interrupted Lakshman Bhagat, who then continued in his telling of an episode from the Mahabharat. Karna listened knowledgeably while everyone else listened respectfully. The tale, as is the teaching of the bhagat in general, was dominated by the shalok.

The shalok, usually in the Hindi language, is recited to many resounding cries of "Vah! Vah!" ("Hear! Hear!"), and is then explained piecemeal for added understanding. The explanation will lead onto the next point which, in turn, will be illustrated by a shalok. If you learn the shalok correctly, then you cannot fail to appreciate the point it makes, or so the theory goes, and, as is the case with the closing couplets in the act of a Shakespearean play, the rhyme helps the memory.

But the most powerful attribute of the shalok is that, by its very nature, it is a piece of ilim, having origins in the scriptures or in the sayings of a great teacher. When one hears a shalok one is being subjected to ilim, and by memorising a shalok one internalises the power of its ilim and one's own ilim grows.

Later in the afternoon I asked Karna Bhagat whether the bhagat composed the shalok himself.

KARNA - By no means. The shalok is correct in form, and must be learned by the bhagat from his guru.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Without a teacher nothing is achieved -

Two disciples stood before Guru Govind  
Who shall we worship?  
The best guru, the man of God  
Has been revealed to you by your actions

RAMZI MAHALEYO - What this shalok is saying is that the seekers, by their very act of asking, had been led to the guru whom they should worship. Is one's guru not Bhagvan? Listen -

Do not raise yourself above others  
Do not speak of yourself as great  
Do not say that YOU can dispense mugti  
And you will merit a thousand blessings

In other words, if you are a true bhagat, you will not regard yourself as one.

(In the course of his discourse Ramzi had recited a shalok wrongly. Karna was quick to correct him and explained...)

KARNA - I do not wish JNY to repeat this wrongly on some other occasion. For then people will ask, "Who taught you this, for it is wrong?" [19/5/82]

On another occasion Shavo Bhopa agreed to repeat a certain shalok for me so that I could copy it down. But he asked me, before he began, to check that it was correct with Satruga Bhagat, for he did not wish to be blamed for getting it wrong and be laughed at.

The shalok, then, is the precise word of Ishvar. Its truth lies in its scriptural origins, or in the spirituality of the guru who first pronounced it. Knowledge of the true way of achieving dharam, then, can be obtained by these two methods: revelation in the person of a guru, or revelation through the scriptures. What true path, then, is trod by the Kori? It is the accepted path of Bhakti.

## V. Bhakti

JNY - How is mugti (release from the cycle of rebirths) achieved?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - "Not one in a lakh (10,000), a few in a crore (10,000,000)."

It is like this. For nine months the babe is upside down in the stomach of a woman. For nine months the ziv cries to Ishvar, "Oh Ishvar, I am in torment. Free me and I will do Bhakti in your name all my life."

So Ishvar allows the ziv to be born. Most will then say, (He stuck his thumb in the air) "You are up there, Ishvar, whereas I am now down here." And so they forget Him, and ignore their promise. But a few do not forget. They lead a life of Bhakti. In their every breath they take Ishvar's name.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Like this: (breathing in and out)  
Ram-e-Ram-e-Ram-e-Ram....

LAKSHMAN - Day and night they do Bhakti without a break. They have no thought for their father, or mother, or son, or daughter, or animals, or fields. They care only for Ishvar and Ishvar is their only thought. It is such people who obtain mugti.  
[19/5/82]

Bhakti's main strength lies in its concept of the accessible God. In tracing its history in South India, Brockington states,

It was characterised by a personal relationship between deity and devotee, and worship became a fervent emotional experience in response to divine grace (1981:130).

By "surrendering" himself to God (Stein 1968:85), or "Participating" in Him (Dumont 1970b:55), the devotee acknowledges dependence on Him for salvation, in return for which access to dharam is obtained.

Here the path of the Hindu bhagat and the Muslim sufi become intertwined. Batai Sahib (Mohammed Latif), whose tomb at Bitt Shah is a centre for both Muslim and Hindu pilgrimage, was a Muslim renowned among those of Sind for his devotion to Allah.

BURO MAYANI - Batai was a Muslim who had the desire only to sing Allah's praises. He played the saaz (stringed instrument), and when he was supposed to be looking after his father's herd he would merely sit and sing praises to Allah - "Allah! Allah! Alef! Alef!". [4/7/81]

Bhakti is the love of worship. The satsang, the dusk-dawn hymn singing session led by bhagat, is a major institution by which dharam is achieved through Bhakti. The four quarters of the night define the nature of the hymns sung. The last of these four themes, according to Lakshman Bhagat, is known as the Velari Vani.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - The Velari Vani is sung from four or five o'clock until dawn. It involves the most beautiful of melodies, and the theme itself is of mugti. Whoever has stayed awake that long and hears these hymns, Bhakti is born in that person's heart, and they follow the path of Bhakti from then on.  
[14/5/82]

## VI. Guru and Satiya

Given that Ishvar is the focus of Bhakti's acts of worship, we need to ask how He is conceptualised in these acts. Although the names "Ishvar" and "Bhagvan" are seldom far from Kori utterance, they do not often occur in the many hymns sung by the bhagat.

SHAVO BHOPA - Bhopa and bhagat are very different. The bhopa has faith in gods, while the bhagat does Bhakti and has faith in Ishvar. He worships satiya, who were humans to whom ilim was given. The gods (dev) were never human. [7/10/81]

Hari Bhagat, a self styled hymn writer, had a low opinion of satiya.

HARI BHAGAT - We worship Ishvar. The gods themselves were only given their power through their worship of Ishvar. The same can be said of the pir and the fakir (Muslim/Hindu Ascetics). Why then is it necessary to worship them?

JNY - And the satiya?

HARI - Who are satiya? You, if you were successful and became famous, would be made a sati (sing.). Guru lead lives of austerity and gain followings. Then, on their death, they are commemorated and a fair is held in their name every year. Thus anyone who strives can become a sati. Avtari (incarnations), by comparison, are different and special. [27/11/81]

These statements may have reflected some of Hari's self esteem as a learned man, or perhaps his membership of the Hans Nirvani sect, sects being an important aspect of Bhakti which will be discussed below. Whatever the reason, his cynicism was not echoed by anyone else and could well have been a veiled criticism of rival bhagat and Muslim ascetics. It was even contrary to the Bhakti rationale whereby, as Ramzi has already mentioned, the teacher, being the source of Ishvar's truth, is worshipped as Ishvar Himself. Similarly the heroes of old are still worshipped as incarnations of Ishvar. In this way the guru and the incarnations of Ishvar are conceptually linked. With the exception of Hari, the Kori saw no significant difference between the terms "satiya" and "avtari". Indeed, they tended to stress the humanity as much as the divinity of the heroes of traditional Hindu legends.

Pictures of satiya were to be found in every Hindu home, and offerings were made to these in accordance with the occasion and the zeal of the family. I once asked Dadi Zatu who these pictures represented.

DADI ZATU - You mean the pictures of Rama, Sita, Hanuman, and

the rest? They are satiya. They are people who lived long ago. Each picture has a story associated with it. [29/9/81]

DADI ZATU - There is a picture in Washa's shop of Kanji (Krishna) playing a flute, and a cow has come up and is licking his foot. ... Kanji had parents who were blind, and every day he took them to the river to bathe. His wife tried to persuade him to lead them into a well, but he answered, "No! They gave me my birth, something which you have never done." Eventually, his mama (MB) killed him.

JNY - How did you come to know this tale?

DADI ZATU - There is a hymn which the bhagat sing which tells of it. [2/1/82]

The very real connection between satiya and their pictures was once hypothesised about in a conversation between Shavo Bhopa and Buro Mayani. They were speaking about directions at the time.

SHAVO BHOPA - The mother of the five Pandava, the mother of Arjan that is, told her sons that South is an evil direction. Arjan was Rama's great teacher.

BURO MAYANI - He was one of the satiya, who are unmatched. They say that he once strung a bow that no one else could string, and with it shot such arrows. One arrow could destroy an entire country. Such are the satiya. They have power because they have ilim.

(They then went on to talk of how a missionary they had once met had spoken of a place in Lahore which contained pictures of all satiya and all gods.)

SHAVO BHOPA - Shall I tell you how these pictures are made in the first place? It is a matter of an earlier age (jug). When satiya were alive, idols were made out of stone in their likeness. These were the images which have been photographed and copies made. This is why so many photos of satiya exist. [23/2/82]

At this stage we need to be clear about the distinction between satiya and the gods.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - Satiya are different from dev (gods). Satiya are the humans to whom Ishvar has given his knowledge. Because of this they have power to do things - just as some people have the power to cure illness. They are people who have lead good lives and to whom Ishvar has given ilim. [30/9/81]

The power of the satiya operates in a different sphere from that of the dev. Shavo Bhopa, having explained to me the distinction between them, went on to say the following.



SHAVO BHOPA - This does not mean, however, that a bhagat will not come to a bhopa if he needs to.

Once I tried to leave the Mother Goddesses of my zach (patrilineage). I took their effigies and threw them in the canal. I had the desire to follow the path of Bhakti. A bhagat made me his disciple and from the day he placed his hand upon me I have been a vegetarian.

But the goddesses would not let me go. I soon became very ill. My knees were swollen, I ached all over, and I had a bad cough. I went to see many doctors, but none could cure me. Finally I went to a bhopa. But all he said was, "Was I not a bhopa myself?" He told me to reinstate the goddesses or else I would never get better. So I restored the temple, and my illnesses left me. Now I am stuck with the upkeep of the temple. In my heart I would rather follow the path of Bhakti, but I am tied to my goddesses, and in this sense I am still a bhopa. [7/10/81]

Here we find an important physical distinction between the practice of Bhakti and that of Devipuza (goddess worship), for there are no temples of Ishvar, nor any of the satiya - his Vaishnavite incarnations. Yet every zach dev has a shrine where it is worshipped. (Pocock - 1973:82 - comments on a similar state of affairs in Gujarat, although there there are also Shivite temples.)

The power of satiya lies not in the immediate, in the realm of illness and misfortune. They are worshipped, not for protection, but for dharam. Just as true knowledge of power over illness was given by Ishvar to the gods, so the truth about dharam was given to satiya, that is, to men such as one's guru. An act of worship, of devotion to a sati, is taken as an act of devotion to Ishvar, and thus is a means of acquiring dharam. This is the path of Bhakti.

### SECTION 3.3: THE BHAGAT

Bhagat, the adherents of Bhakti, occupy a respectable position in Kori society. On one occasion I had asked Mama Sahadeva whether bhagat were the same as bhava - the priests at the shrine of Rama Pir, a local saint. His strong reaction to such a comparison indicated his high regard for bhagat, as well as his low regard for bhava.

MAMA SAHADEVA - No they certainly are not one and the same. Bhava never leave the temple. That is where they make their living. Bhava are corrupt people. They grab hold of an unsuspecting person, and plant a tili (tilak) on their forehead. Then they demand money for having done this. Sometimes they grab a whole family and then demand five or ten rupees. One came at me once, and I shouted "Get away!" They are so corrupt. [17/9/81]

One can gather from this that, by comparison, bhagat are noble, altruistic, and trustworthy. (We find them having similar status among the Bhils of Rajasthan - Doshi 1971). Bhagat are also seen as a source of knowledge, and this is their major contribution to Kori society in general. For example, as he performed a certain rite of sacrifice at the festival of Parwa, Buro Bhopa poured a pot of water over the peg by which a nearby cow was tethered. I asked him why.

BURO BHOPA - We do that because it is our Dharam. We honour the cow, you see. I can tell you no more. I would have to ask a bhagat for an explanation. [6/3/82]

Bhagat gain their knowledge by consulting the scriptures, or through the teachings of their guru. Thus they have access to that which is not available to the non-bhagat. On one occasion, for example, I had asked Dasrath Shekhani to explain an aspect of the wedding ritual.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - If you wish to find out about such things you should ask either Satruga Bhagat or Lakshman Bhagat. They are big bhagat. I can only tell you what is in my head. Otherwise I would be making things up and that would be false. [30/9/81]

The words of the bhagat are considered more wise than those of most people, and their advice is taken seriously. They therefore tend to be heeded when they make decrees, especially in a body, and as a result they do exercise some power over the Kori, and the Kori lifestyle. We will explore in later chapters some of the major contributions this has made to the Kori identity. For the moment let us examine the "bhagat" image

in the eyes of the average villager.

Many of the excesses of the Kori (e.g. drinking, gambling, smoking, etc.) earn the disapproval of bhagat. And in a sense the bhagats' access to scripture often creates a barrier between them and the non-bhagat. The non-bhagat claim that the bhagat never translate the scriptures to them so that they can understand. The bhagat say that there is no use in translating them because no one would understand them if they did.

JNY - Do the other villagers understand scripture?

KUNRI BHAGAT - How do they understand? They never listen. If they did understand they would have given up drinking and gambling long ago.

Tell me, do you hear the "Krr krr!" of the owls at night? and the "Ti ti ti!" of the magpies? And the dogs when they go "Ooooo!"? This means that all is not well. That evil is about. Now we, that is The (Lakshman) Bhagat and I, keep stressing that what we should all do is get together for evening worship. People could contribute a half mond of grain each, and we could make an offering. Then the village would be safe at night. Did we not agree to do this last night?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Yes, but what they agree to do at night they forget about by morning. [22/4/81]

We can compare this cynicism among the bhagat themselves to that of Arjan about bhagat.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - They never translate (their hymns). They say, "Do not eat meat! Do not do this! Do not do that! And do lots of Bhakti!" But they never get things straight, and they themselves are all mixed up. There are so many guru, and each follows their own separate path. [25/3/81]

By its very nature, adherence to Bhakti is exclusive rather than open to the Kori in general (see also Pocock 1973:142). Thus it stands in contrast to Devipuza, the worship of the zach goddess.

## I. The Guru/Selo Relationship

Central to Bhakti is the guru/selo, or teacher/disciple relationship. Satruga Bhagat used a mundane analogy in explaining this relationship to me.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - We know that Zia al Haq is in power in this land. Yet we never see him. When have you ever seen him? If I were to ask you where he is at this very moment, would you be able to tell me?

But, we do see the police. And if a policeman were to come here he could tie up the whole village if he wanted to and we would be able to do nothing. Why? Because we know that he wields the power of Zia al Haq, who we have never seen.

In the same way we never see Ishvar, but we know that he has given the guru authority and power, (and here Satruga ended on a note tinged with chagrin), and yet, if the police were to give an order we would all run to obey, whereas if a guru were to give one we would all say, "So, where is Ishvar?". [24/5/82]

What Satruga's analogy does not stress is that, whereas the policeman's power is political and is immediate, the guru's power is moral/spiritual, and can be postponed.

Lakshman Bhagat and Jari were devotees of Ram Bai, a wellknown guru of the Vaniya caste, who lived in the town of Deple in eastern Sind. Each year a fair was held at her centre of worship, and while we were living in Sirah the two devotees made the pilgrimage to it. This led Nilo to make the following half humorous comment about their zeal.

NILO KOTWAR - My Phuo (FZH) has gone off to Deple to see Ram Bai and get rid of his pap. [17/6/81]

Bharat Patel later gave me more details about Ram Bai.

BHARAT PATEL - You will have heard of Ram Bai? She is a woman of the Vaniya caste. Her parents had arranged a marriage for her, but she said that she had received a call from Rama Bhagvan, and could not marry. Her parents and her in-laws tried to get her to change her mind. Eventually the man to whom she was to be married came to see her. But she said she would not marry him, and called him "brother". When she did this she was finally excused her marriage, and instead became a celibate bhagatani. She began to wear white. She would worship in her temple and refused to be dependent upon her family. Occasionally her mother would cook her her rotlo, but usually she fended for herself.

She holds a fair every year. When worship is offered and the ghi is burned on the coals, the flames rise so high that they light up the entire area and can be seen from two miles distance. People will come from many miles around to have audience with her. [29/8/81]

Buro Mayani had similar things to say about Ram Bai.

BURO MAYANI - Ram Bai is a Vaniya bhagatani. They say that she

was engaged to be married, but asked for her freedom instead, so that she could be a bhagat. Now she sits at Deple, and many people go to have audience with her and ask her philosophical questions. All castes are welcome apart from Sindi, although Sindi holy men can come for an audience.

Ram Bai is supported by the Vaniya. Every day there is Bhakti (worship) and food is provided for all, although low castes, such as Bhil or Bhangi, have their dishes separate. People go to her for help too. Dharmu Bhagat went to her and she gave him two thousand rupees. She says that Ishvar has given her much and that it is her duty to share it with others.

JNY - (I explained Nilo's quip about pap, and asked what he had meant.)

BURO - Nilo was just joking. But people do go to Ram Bai and ask her to forgive wrongs they have done. She is seen as a representative of Ishvar. [4/7/81]

It is not only Ram Bai who is seen to have the power to absolve pap, but guru in general. This was stressed by Deyalu Bhagat who was visiting Lakshman Bhagat and was leading worship in the evening. On completing a hymn he made an effort to explain it to those who were listening.

DEYALU BHAGAT - The chorus of the hymn I have been singing is "The guru is the bearer of burdens/pap." The verses say that it matters not whether you are high caste or low. If a Bhangi or a Meghvar comes to a ferry, the ferryman will not refuse them their passage because they are lowly. He does not worry that his ferry might become impure. (Laughter.) No! He takes them to the other side as he would anyone. In the same way, your guru will make sure that you are sailed safely to the other side, no matter how high or low you are.

(The ferry sailing the ziv safely to the other side of the Vethani river - see 3.1,IV above - is a common image in Bhakti hymns.)

The Guru Mahatma Jin is open to all who are in need. When a man is drowning who would not rescue him? So Mahatma Jin says, "The guru does not hesitate to help those who turn to him in need." [15/5/82]

The guru/selo relationship, then, is one wherein the selo has faith in the guru, who, as Ishvar's representative, has the power to meet his spiritual and moral needs (see also Pocock 1973:161). The guru, as Ishvar's representative, also has the knowledge to be the selo's mentor.

This relationship is not a passing one, but one which develops over time. This was demonstrated by Satruga Bhagat who, on one occasion, was deriding the acceptance by Christians of Parbhu Isu (Lord Jesus) as their



## guru.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - I possess a book which I have read and which tells of Parbhu Isu. It says that Parbhu Isu came here and did this, and then went there and did that. He healed this man, and cast a demon out of that man.

But the true guru does not spend one day here and one day there. He is to be listened to for a long time. A guru is like a school master. If you go to school for one day, and then do not return for several years, then you will not have learned a thing and what will have been the point?

If an ascetic were to come to my house and greet me, and I were to sit him down and ask him to be my guru, and then the next day he were to get up and leave and not return for two years, what good would it have done me? I could easily have died while he was away. A proper guru must stay with you for a long period. It is only through his teaching that you will benefit.

(Satruga Bhagat generally looked down upon the zeal of his younger brother, Lakshman, and appeared to be referring here to Lakshman's Deple pilgrimage. He was stressing that one could not absolve oneself of one's moral imperfections merely by having an audience with one's guru, but that one had to apply the guru's teachings to one's lifestyle.)

The teachings of the guru remain with the disciple wherever he is, and whatever he is doing. These are his "fruit" (rewards of discipleship). [24/5/82]

## II. Initiation

To become the selo of a guru does not merely involve paying attention to his teachings, however. It involves entering into a special relationship with him which is bounded by ritual, and adhering to his prescribed way of life. Here certain interesting parallels emerge between Bhakti, the symbol of the Kori "Rennaissance", and Devipuza (God/Goddess worship), which, if we are to believe the opinions of certain bhagat, is the pursuit of the unenlightened.

To become the selo of a guru, one must undergo initiation.

JNY - How did you become one of your guru's selo?

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Well, first he placed his hand upon my head. Then, he took a bowl of sweet milk and, having drunk from it, he gave it to me to finish. This is an act of great meaning, the creation of an everlasting bond. For now I look upon him

as my father, and he looks upon me as his own son. [9/3/82]

The Kori have the phrase "piyalawara" ("ones of the drinking bowl") with which they refer to those who possess the power of the dev. I asked Shavo Bhopa what the meaning of this phrase was.

SHAVO BHOPA - When a man wishes to follow a bhagat and be his selo, then the bhagat will lay his hand upon him to initiate their relationship. When a man wishes to have the power of a bhopa, he must drink from the bowl given him by his teacher. This is the piyala. If the teacher's dev asks for goats (in sacrifice), then the bowl will contain the blood of a sacrificed goat. But if the dev is vegetarian, then the bowl will contain milk from the temple cow. [7/10/81]

The practices of the bhopa and the bhagat thus share similar commensal symbolism.

Initiation allows the selo access to the greater and more effective truths known by the guru, truths which are kept from the public at large. The secrets of the initiate's worship gives it an advantage over the more general worship of the uninitiated, which is described by Lakshman Bhagat as follows. He was showing me the pictures of satiya in his uthak.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - That is a picture of Mahadev (Shiva) and Paroti, his woman. We do their worship every day in the morning and the evening. We light incense, or else a diva (ghi/oil lamp), and we do prayers. We make requests for good crops, good health, and such things.

JNY - Is it just the one picture you worship?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - No, we worship and pray to them all. There is one of Rama, of Lakshman, of Krishna Bhagvan, of Mira Bai playing her sitar, and one of Rama Pir. We call our worship "samaran". In the morning it is called "Parbhat Samaran", and in the evening "Sanya Samaran". [6/3/82]

Upon initiation acts of worship increase in complexity.

MANZI BHAGAYO - The guru lays his hand upon your head. Then he will teach you many phrases, sabath, (similar to mantra - see also Pocock 1973:99). There are many rites to be performed and certain words which must accompany them. For example, when you seat yourself at your place of worship, you must do so repeating certain words. Otherwise you will have failed to seat yourself properly and your worship will be useless. [26/12/81]

At a later date Manzi told more.

MANZI - My guru taught me three phrases which were to be used in my prayers. These were secret, and spoken to no one except to other selo of my guru. Only the guru and his selo know these words. He himself learns them from his own guru before him. (Manzi, however, had long since turned to Christianity, and treated the whole matter with light hearted cynicism.) The phrases I was taught were "Satnam", which means "true name", "So'ang", which means "the six chosen men" - men in general being lost, and "Sai", which means "true".

I used these words in my worship, which I had to perform quietly and in a private place like the fields. My worship, which I performed both morning and evening, but mainly evening, also included a recital of the "guru's sign". (Manzi proceeded to mumble a string of words which began with "Om", and trailed off into silence as his memory faded.) This is the proof that you are the selo of your own particular guru. You will be asked to recite your guru's sign, and if you cannot do so then this will be taken as proof that you are not his true selo.

JNY - Is this sign taken from the scriptures?

MANZI - No. I do not know where it comes from. My guru was taught it by his guru, and that is how I learned it. [15/3/82]

The teaching Ramzi received was of a similar nature.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - On completion of my initiation rite my guru finally gave me a phrase. This phrase is secret and for use in my prayers. I pray twice daily, rising at five in the morning - the time when the Mullah calls, and while it is still dark, even before I drink my morning tea, I perform my morning worship. Then again at the setting of the sun.

JNY - Is this phrase a long recitation, or a few words?

RAMZI - It is but one word. But this one word is all that is needed. Tell me, if I had one son who worked hard, and another man had eight who did not, who would be the better off? Similarly, the one word that makes an impression is better than the many which do not.

A Sindi Pir (ascetic) was once known to have said that a certain word, "Alef Be", would be sufficient if it has made an impression. And so my phrase is sufficient for me. My guru told me that there is one word which will make you want to just say "Praise Bhagvan!", and there is one which, by the mere act of pronouncing it, will move you to tears, such is its power. [9/3/82]

We see here the very real relationship emerging between the guru's knowledge and his power over the non-initiate. The knowledge is secret to all but the few, and therein lies the source of its power, just as by having access to the scriptures through their mastering of literacy, the

bhagat wield power over the illiterate.

### III. The Bhagat and the Uninitiated

The bhagat, however, also imparts knowledge of a more general nature and application, which can be used in the service of the non-initiated. An example of such knowledge is the formula recited at a burial, the burial "Om", which is a corporate act on the behalf of the ziv of the deceased. This is chanted by a bhagat after the body has been bricked into the grave. The all-male burying party gather around the grave, each grasping some earth in their right hand. This is to be tossed in in one corporate movement when the chant has reached its conclusion, and all present join in the cry of "Om!" with which it ends (See 6.4).

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Many people are ignorant. They just throw in the earth to cover the grave and think that is all that is required. But the chant is necessary for the release of the ziv of the deceased from dukh (pain). The chant must be spoken. It is like paying the debtor's debts so that he can be released from prison.

We repeat the chant, then throw the earth. Otherwise the shadow of the discomfort in which the ziv remains would recoil upon us. The chant was first spoken by Kabir himself (Kabir was a renowned spiritual leader, and founder of the Kabir Panth). It is a chant of release (mugti). We say "Om" at the end as we are in reality one with Ishvar, and we are re-affirming this.

If you need any such chants explained, come to me. For, just as a rupee is useless unless you know what you can buy with it, so a chant is useless unless you know what it is for.  
[24/4/82]

We saw above how the bhopa initiates his selo with a drink from his piyala, and thereafter the selo gains access to knowledge of how to mediate the power of the dev so as to specialise in healing illnesses amongst the non-initiated. Here, then, we find the equivalent in Bhakti. The guru initiates his selo into the secrets of his knowledge of the true path and this enables the selo to perform certain rites in the life of the non-initiated. The primary difference is that, whereas the bhopa has power in areas of present concern, e.g. healing, protection from harm/misfortune, the bhagat has power in areas of future concern, e.g. life after death, the true path to mugti.

This distinction is not rigid, however, for the bhagat on one or two occasions appear to be straying into the realm of the bhopa. Words of scripture, if recited over a glass of water, empower this water to relieve the pain of the scorpion or snake bite (see 4.3). Inversely, we see in the "guru's sign", which Manzi spoke of, something of the non scriptural spell of the bhopa. The bhopa will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 4.1 and again in Chapter 5. It is, however, interesting to note here how the same process whereby initiation leads to knowledge, and the same master/disciple relationship is accepted as necessary in the structures of these two reputedly very different areas of Kori belief.

The knowledge which the guru teaches his selo is not always secret, and can be more general in nature. It consists of matters of philosophy and theology. Information about the satiya, for example. On one occasion Buro Mayani launched into a very accurate and detailed account of Ravan's capture of Sita, and her subsequent rediscovery by Hanuman. Ramshi Varesa knew the story too, and joined in occasionally, eyes shining. I later asked Shavo Bhopa, who was also present at the time, what their source of this information was.

SHAVO BHOPA - I have heard this story from a bhagat.

JNY - Was it sung in a hymn?

SHAVO BHOPA - No, although there are one or two hymns of Rama and Lakshman. These stories are mainly told if you ask your guru about certain matters and he explains them. [23/2/82]

#### IV. The Responsibilities of the Bhagat

A final aspect of the guru/selo relationship which needs to be mentioned is that it is one wherein the selo serves the guru, and service involves material as well as intellectual allegiance. The selo, however, is not to be confused with the village kotwar, a role played in Sirah by Nilo Paji.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - The kotwar is the one whose duty it is to distribute the sweets offered. Not every village has one, but if some bhagat live there they often appoint a man to be kotwar. They look to see who is the fairest man, and sincere in making offerings, and, if he is willing, he is appointed. It is then his duty to look after the wishes of the bhagat. He must also carry invitations from other villages to his villagers. If a man



does not receive his invitation to a feast, then the host can take the kotwar of that village to task for it. [18/9/81]

The selo's service involves meeting the guru's physical needs.

JNY - Did your initiation take place at your own home?

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Yes, I made my guru a gift of one hundred rupees and a suit of three garments. Every time he comes to visit me I must make such gifts, and if it is beyond my means I must ask my relations for a loan. For is one's guru not Bhagvan? [9/3/82]

It is not merely the selo who must provide for the needs of the guru, however. Any service done by a bhagat must be repaid in the form of gifts. The following conversation illustrates how this is often viewed with cynicism by the non-bhagat. Talk was of the recent feast and hymn singing held at Mothi Akhiyani's house.

JNY - Tell me about Devi Dah (a well known bhagat).

MAMA SAHADEVA - Devi Dah is Satruga's guru. He is an old man now, but he used to be a great singer, and is much respected. If he is invited to a Hymn Singing, and there are other singers also, he will eat his wheat pudding and go to sleep. But if he is the only bhagat there he will sing through the whole night with ease.

DADI ZATU - He was invited to Mothi's feast but Satruga did not wish him to join the hymn singing. You see the Hangani (Zach from nearby village) had also been invited, and Satruga has quarrelled with them over a sum of money. Poor Devi Dah couldn't attend, although he did eat, but then went and slept at Satruga's.

In the morning Mothi gave all the bhagat each one hundred rupees and a headscarf. But Devi Dah could not even come to receive them. And it is usually the case that he will not sing at such an occasion unless he is going to be given a lot of money for it.

MAMA SAHADEVA - The same can be said for Satruga. These days bhagat are not as they used to be. It is terrible. [27/7/81]

Despite being prone to such universal human weaknesses, the bhagat is expected to develop a spiritual nature and is instructed by the guru as to how to practice bringing this about. Humility is one trait which should be visible.

JNY - What do the bhagat sing about?

SHAVO BHOPA - They sing the hymns taught to them by their guru. These should always take preference over the hymns which

they have composed themselves. If a bhagat sings only his own hymns, then he is not a true bhagat. [23/2/82]

bhagat are also expected to disassociate themselves from life's traumas and pleasures. They are expected to display shanti (peace).

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Shanti means to have patience. It means to keep your hopes and desires under control. You, for example, will be returning to your own homeland soon. You will be able to imagine what your house looks like, where the door is, what trees there are. These are your desires. [6/3/82]

To develop such a nature there are certain rules which the bhagat must observe.

SHAVO BHOPA - A bhagat made me his selo, and from the day he laid his hand upon me I became a vegetarian. [7/10/81]

Vegetarianism sets bhagat apart from the rest of the Kori, and it can be taken to an extreme.

DADI ZATU - A bhagat will never use the word "meat". We use the word often, but then we eat it. [23/12/81]

There are other rules to be observed, such as those already mentioned by Manzi and Ramzi. In addition, individual bhagat will follow their own individual disciplines, such as the fasting of Lakshman Bhagat which was spoken of in 3.1 above.

## V. Sects

This study of the bhagat is incomplete until the existence of panth (sects) are discussed. The history of panth is a part of the history of Bhakti itself. Panth are generally initiated by a guru who, combining exceptional teachings with powers of organisation, builds up a following which continues on after their death. Ironically, as Pocock (1973:95) has noted, the very success of a panth, in terms of its growth in size and power, tends to frustrate the ascetic ambitions of its founder.

JNY - Who was it who first taught the path of Bhakti?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - It was Hans Nirvan. He came from India in the year 1932. It was he who united us all in the one path of Bhakti. Before then there were no bhagat. Here and there were scattered people who practiced Bhakti, but they practiced

in isolation. Hans Nirvan brought us all together. Before he came we used to eat Big Meat (buffalo), as the Sindi do. But Hans Nirvan taught us that it is a pap to eat Big Meat. He taught us not to eat with Muslims, and not to eat with Meghvar. He said "Do satsang (worship) and be bhagat!" and he taught us the way of Bhakti.

JNY - Were there panth before he came?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Yes, panth did exist. The Kabir Panth has existed since the time of Kabir, that is since the time of your Jesus. But, just as there were no Christians amongst us until you Christians came, so none of us were members of any panth until Sri Hans Sahib came.

There are twelve and a half panth in total: Sate Nam, Das Nam, Kabir Gorah Panth - which is a Bhil panth, and the Hans Nirvani Panth. These are just some of them. [14/5/82]

Panth, then, are an acknowledged part of the Bhakti tradition. One's membership of a panth depends upon the panth of which one's guru is a member.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - It is impossible to belong to more than one panth. [6/3/82]

The main Kori panth appear to be the Hans Nirvani, and the Kabir panth.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Those who follow Sri Hans Sahib are those who join their spirit to his spirit. He is open to anyone who will follow him.

He, himself, was a Honaro (goldsmith caste), and his followers are either Honaro or Kori. The Sindi do not follow him. The Sindi say that they will only follow those who will be of service to them. And so they wait for results before they are willing to commit themselves. But Sri Hans Sahib serves the spirit of men, while the Sindi go looking for someone who will put on a show.

Write this down! "Om Sri Hans Sahib!" First of all comes Om. [25/4/82]

If the guru can be seen as the selo's spiritual father, then the panth is his spiritual clan, with the power and teachings of its founding guru at its head.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - I am a Hans Nirvani. My guru is Man Das. He is a great teacher. If you were to place a saaz in his hands he would not return it to you until the morning has come and the satsang is over. (As hymns were sung from memory, this was often an allusion to the depth of a bhagat's knowledge.) [9/3/82]

MANZI BHAGAYO - My first guru was Ravo Bhagat. He was of the Kabir Panth. I had another guru also. He was a Marwari (from

Marwar) and also of the Kabir panth.

JNY - How many guru is it possible to have?

MANZI - Oh, as many as you wish to. Some people have as many as twenty four or twenty five. [26/12/81]

HARI BHAGAT - My guru is Ram Das. Bhima Bhagat is my kaka (FyB), and he gave me my initial teaching. I, myself, am now a composer of hymns, and have had a book of hymns published in the Sindhi script.

JNY - To which panth do you belong. Do you worship Vishnu or Shiva?

HARI BHAGAT - I am a Hans Nirvani, and follow the teachings of Sri Hans Sahib. We are all Hans Nirvani, although there is also the Kabir panth. There are many panth, but we all worship Vishnu. There are no worshippers of the Ling among the Kori, although those of other castes do worship Shiva. These are called "Shiva Nam". They are two panth: the Puri, who live in towns, and the Gari, who live in the country. [27/11/81]

Ideally, all panth follow the same path to Ishvar. In practice, however, as is not unusual with similar divisions within any general spiritual doctrine, this is not always recognised to be the case.

KANU DUNGARANI - Look at the bhagat! Some are Hans Nirvani, some are Kabir Panth. They are all meant to worship Ishvar. Yet if bhagat from opposing panth ever meet at a hymn singing all they ever do is argue. [23/8/81]

On one occasion my arrival at the house of Lakshman prompted Karna Bhagat, who was visiting, to take up the theme that the Ishvar that we all follow is one and the same. This often happened when I was about, as I was a recognised non-initiate.

KARNA BHAGAT - There may be twelve and a half panth, but there is only one bridegroom.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Yes, you may worship Lord Isu, but Lord Isu is one and the same with Bhagvan. Just as we say "Ram", the Sindi say "Rehim", and we all follow the same Bhagvan. (The Arabic "Rehim" was held by Muslims to be one of the ninety-nine names of Allah.)

Ramzi MAHALEYO - Yes, the Muslims also do Bhakti, you know. Where we only pray twice a day, in the morning and evening, the Sindi pray five times daily. Yet their way is different.

KARNA BHAGAT - (Intent on illustrating the oneness of Krishna.) It is written that Krishna Bhagvan had sixteen thousand cow girls. Sixteen thousand! How could that be? How was it that at one time he would be able to hold each cow girl by the ear and at the same time play his flute to the cows? It is because He is

everywhere, and everything is one in Him.

(At this point Jari arrived and turned the conversation in another direction with the result that, despite all that had just been said, it centred on a specific example of disunity between panth. Ratani, Lavi Dungarani's wife, had been worried that Lakshman Bhagat and Karna Bhagat would be too busy at another feast to attend the Lavi's feast, which was to be held in six or seven day's time.)

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - If we receive an invitation, then of course we will be there. There is no question of us being absent.

JARI - You see, Khorī Dah has been invited, but he knows that Devi Dah will also be coming. So he has said that he will only come if the phrase "Om Naran" is used in the worship.

NILO KOTWAR - "Om Naran" indeed! Who does he think he is to dictate what is and is not to be said?

(I asked for some clarification.)

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Khorī Dah is of the Sate Nam Panth, and they say that Naran is Bhagvan, whereas Devi Dah is a Hans Nirvani and uses the phrase "Om Sri".

NILO - Om Naran, Om Sri, Om! Are they not all just different names for Bhagvan who is one? They all have "Om" in common, do they not?

Did you hear about the two Hindus who, at this very moment, are in jail? Apparently they had a fight in Tande. One was from Hyderabad, and he said that Hans Nirvan was the true guru. The other said the Rama Pir was the true guru, and they came to blows over the matter. It was in the Rama Pir Temple itself that it happened. (This was met with general amusement.)  
[23/8/81]

One thing is certain about the divisions and disagreements between the panth. This is that they decrease in their importance in the eyes of the Kori the less s/he is involved in Bhakti. What to a devout selo is a matter of faith, loyalty, and hope for the future, to the less spiritually minded is just a silly quarrel between bhagat.



## SECTION 3.4: ACTS OF WORSHIP

### I. Bhao and Dharam

The occasion when it is possible for the adherents of Bhakti to practice their doctrines openly and proclaim them to a gathering of non-initiates is known as "The Bhao". (The connection between the Bhao and the funeral is explored fully in 6.4.) The word "bhao" itself has several usages in the Kori language, not the least of them being "market price". It has a specific meaning, however, when used in the context of rebirth, for it is an act of dharam.

On one occasion Mama Sahadeva's daughter, Baya had, recovered from a bad fever. Her father gave her money, and told her to buy bhao - a bag of sweets to be distributed amongst the village children. This she did, wandering from house to house, proudly dispensing her offering. Such instances were commonplace.

Bhao is given in thanksgiving, after an eclipse for example.

DADI ZATU - After the sun comes out again you should sprinkle the houses with water, wash your clothes, and have a bath. There is usually some bhao given out also. [31/7/81]

Bhao is not always given simply in thanksgiving, however.

BOZO AKHIYANI - A lot of bhao is merely given in Ishvar's name by those who can afford it. Then all those who eat the bhao are grateful, and say, "May thou be blessed." This all mounts up, and increases that person's dharam in Ishvar's eyes. [7/6/82]

To give bhao is to give a gift of sweets in Ishvar's name. This may be in direct repayment for something He has done, or simply as a way of increasing one's spirituality. In both cases dharam is gained. By taking Ishvar's name, gratitude for receiving bhao is ideally directed past the giver towards Ishvar. This results in an increase in the status of the giver in Ishvar's eyes, which will count as dharam in his favour when the time comes for him to be reborn. Earthly loss will then become heavenly gain. Not to give bhao if an occasion demands it, therefore, is an act of ingratitude which will eventually count against the person concerned.

Bhao offerings differ from offerings to dev, as the name taken is that of Ishvar. Bhao is thus inevitably associated with Bhakti. Offerings

to the dev have other terms, such as zar, or kher (see 5.2). Bhao is essentially sugary sweets, sweetness being the taste of Bhakti.

The giving of bhao is an act of devotion to Ishvar. It can be accompanied by the satsang, the offering of devotional hymns to Ishvar and to His incarnations. (While the Gujarati sect founded by Swami Narayan is known as the "Satsang", "the Society of the True" - Pocock 1973:Ch6 - the more common usage of the word in Northern India links it with the Kori usage.) On one occasion Satruga Bhagat had a pot of sweet rice cooked and invited Karna Bhagat to lead an all night satsang, which in itself incorporated the giving of bhao.

DADI ZATU - He does this every year. It is done with money from his wheat harvest. Others do it too. They buy bhao and distribute it. [6/5/82]

## II. The Bhao

The combination of the devotional offering of hymns and of bhao has been institutionalised in its most flamboyant form in "The Bhao" an extensive act of devotion involving the feasting of many guests, and the holding of an all night satsang central to which was the offering of bhao sweets to all present. The Bhao is held only by those who can afford to do so. A rich household or hamlet will hold a Bhao once a year, and there is thus a calendar of annual Bhao which occur locally. They tend to be held in either the Hot or the Rain seasons, at times when there is not too much work to be done in the fields of ripening cotton.

As the day approaches, representatives from the hamlet are sent out to deliver invitations to guru and relations. Unlike invitations for a wedding, those invited are not expected to contribute towards the expense.

MASHI VIHI - When you invite people to a wedding you give da'it. You take a handful of rice mixed with turmeric and give a pinch to each hamlet you go to. These days people do not bother with the rice so much. They just announce the date.

JNY - Is rice given for a Bhao?

MASHI VIHI - No. For a Bhao, wayk is given. wayk means that whatever is offered will be given in Ishvar's name, and nothing need be paid for or given return. Da'it, by comparison, means

that something will be expected of you, so attend only if you can. [9/1/82]

Messengers are sent far afield to invite kin and affines. If the relationship is close, or the person invited is of a high standing, their womenfolk are often persuaded to come too. Where the woman herself is keen on spiritual matters, as is sometimes the case if the woman's children are grown up, she will need no persuading. Boys are also sent to the nearby Kori villages inviting all to come. The more who come and are satisfied in feast, music, and bhao, the greater will be the dharam which will accrue to the host.

Messengers are also sent to invite leading bhagat. Selo offer gifts to their guru, presenting the lure of more gifts to follow. Bhagat of high standing or musical reknown are much sought after, not only as extraordinary sources of spiritual blessing, but also as performers who will entertain the other guests at the host's expense - although this is never overtly acknowledged.

The whole day is spent in preparation. A hearth is dug for the great cooking pots. An uthak is levelled, sanded, decorated, and quilts are laid out on which the guests are to be sat. As the guests begin to arrive in increasing numbers once the heat of the day is past, they are shepherded away to the houses of their near relatives throughout the village where they are seated upon quilted beds and offered cups of sweet milky tea.

As evening arrives and the work in the fields is ended the village grows crowded as the working villagers return home and greet their guests. Residents from the surrounding Kori villages begin to appear, timing their arrival well so that they do not have to wait too long before the feasting. A group of young men gather around the cooking pots, and eating mats are hurriedly spread as youths are sent round the houses to summon the women and children to the feast.

First, however, a ceremony must be performed with a portion of the food. It is smothered in ghi atop hot glowing coals, and set alight by one of the senior bhagat. In the case of the Bhao held by Mothi Akhiyani's household this ceremony was performed by Devi Dah.

LAVI DUNGARANI - This is the doing of havan. It is done in the name of Bhagvan. The bhagat performing it will do havan, accompanied by recitations, in front of the household pictures of

Krishna, Rama, Lakshman, and the others. The food is burned on coals with ghi, and then the bhagat will bow to it. After that we can all eat. [3/6/82]

While the women and children eat, the men sit in the shadows of the various houses, or gather on the quilts in the uthak, renewing old acquaintances and catching up on the latest news. Alcohol is strictly out of order at the Bhao, being frowned upon by the bhagat and counterproductive to the devotional mood required by the occasion. Consumption of strong drink by guests is held over until the day after. bhagat also abstain from smoking, but this is not generally discouraged. Indeed, the generous host will provide cigarettes or bidi liberally to all who come. Cannabis, being an enhancer of musical appreciation, is not frowned upon either, and there will be the inevitable small group of cannabis mowali who will gather around a pipe and avail themselves of the resin which will also be supplied generously by the host.

When the women and children have eaten their fill it will be the turn of the men. The Bhao feast must contain something sweet, and this is usually either sweet rice or wheat pudding (shiro). When all have eaten, including the hosts and their helpers, the satsang will eventually begin. Throughout the night tea is served at intervals. Young men appear with kettles of tea and buckets containing cups, saucers, and water. They form human chains through the gathering, passing full cups up and empty ones back to be washed, until all have drunk and are refreshed. Generous hosts will serve two cups to each guest, the server waiting by the guest until he has finished with the cup so that it can be sent back to be washed and filled for the next guest.

And there is, of course, the act of sharing the bhao itself. Handfuls of white sweets are given to all present by the village kotwar who has a good eye for distribution and a reputation for fairness.

### III. The Satsang

Bhagat learn the hymns they sing from their guru, and they earn their reputation not so much from what they sing as from how well they sing and play their musical instruments. The very act of listening to a hymn being sung is an act of spiritual merit. One result of this is that one



does not have to understand to listen, and the vast majority of those who come to the satsang do not understand what is being sung. (Here we see an ironic inversion of the vernacular hymns of the original Bhakti movements, whose appeal lay in their intelligibility - see Stein 1968:83). Indeed, after they have feasted, a great many of the guests can be seen stretched out on the quilts, dozing with one ear taking in the singing.

By and large the tunes and the occasional popular "hook line" are what are remembered. As by their very nature the teachings of Bhakti can only be learned by the initiate through the guru, it is unsurprising that the hymns sung by the bhagat at satsang are never heard repeated by the uninitiated at work or play, for it is unlikely that they will know any. Again we are brought back to a point made earlier. Bhagat, as a rule, do not wish to waste time explaining things to those who would not understand anyway, and the uninitiated seldom understand because bhagat never take the time to explain anything to them.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - These bhagat come and sing their hymns. We do not understand most of them, and they will not explain them to us. Sometimes they argue amongst themselves, but we who listen are still none the wiser.

We enjoy listening to the hymns, but it is more just the pleasure of the good music which is a part of our heritage than because of a real understanding of what they sing about. They sometimes sing old stories which have been put into couplets by poets long ago. Who knows if they are true or false, but they make good listening. [4/6/82]

It must be borne in mind when considering the above statements that Arjan was a cynic, and adhered to a number of Christian beliefs. Nevertheless, although their interpretation of the phenomena may be different, this is an accurate illustration of the attitude of a large proportion of non-initiated Kori towards the bhagat and their hymns.

There are, however, occasions where bhagat do take the time to explain what they are singing about. This may be the case in situations where they feel that their audience are willing to learn from them. We will come across such instances below. One particular bhagat, however, stood apart from the rest. This was Dharmu Bhagat. Dharmu's youth and musical versatility had elevated him in the eyes of the younger Kori, and given him a large popular following.



Pansa Akhiyani would listen continually to recordings of hymns sung by bhagat and recorded at local satsang on his battery radio cassette player, an artifact popular among the more well off Kori households. He did this while he watched over his shop, and, when on one occasion he was playing a tape of Dharmu Bhagat, I asked him to summarise for me what the hymn was about.

PANSA AKHIYANI - Dharmu Bhagat is good. He explains what he is singing about. At Lakshman Bhagat's satsang, (which had taken place recently), I could not really understand what the bhagat was singing, although I did go along to listen. I do know about hymns, but not many. [7/5/82]

Ideally the satsang should last from dusk until dawn. In practice its length will vary depending upon the importance of the occasion and the number of bhagat present.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Let us say that it begins about nine in the evening, and goes on for as long you wish it to. Sometimes two o' clock, sometimes three o'clock, sometimes all night until dawn. [14/5/82]

When it coincides with the holding of a Bhao, a satsang will last until dawn.

The satsang begins with a hymn to Ganesh.

MOTHI BHAGAYO - All Hindus worship Lord Ganesh. At the satsang the first hymn must be one to Lord Ganesh. Ganesh has to be honoured first. [20/5/82]

There are four phases through which the satsang passes, each having its own theme, and accompanying hymns and tunes. When inquired about, these four stages tend to be linked with the four stages through which life is perceived to pass.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - The first theme is known as "Byanak". Hymns are to do with death and rebirth. There follow the stages of youthfulness, and then the last stage where the man has three legs, two that are his own, and a stick to help him walk.

JNY - What is the final stage called?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - This is the "Vekri" theme, and is sung from four, five o'clock until dawn. These are the most beautiful hymns, and the theme is mugti (release). Whoever has stayed awake and hears these hymns, Bhakti is born in that person's heart, and he will then follow the path of Bhakti. [14/5/82]

Satruga Bhagat, however, had a low opinion of Lakshman Bhagat's knowledge on the matter, which, when I gave him the opportunity, he was not slow to denounce.

JNY - What are the various themes of the satsang? Lakshman Bhagat told me that the final theme was about mugti, for example.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Let us just disregard what Lakshman Bhagat has been telling you... (At this remark Jari, who was present, rose and left.) There are three themes. The first is "Byanak". This is the theme of the ziv. The second is "Parah". This theme is of Ishvar, and is pure. The third is "Vekri", which can also be called "Advedi". It is the theme of the spirit.

You see, there are the three stages of the body. "Balapan", where one is a child. "Jopan", where one is young. And "Budapan", where one is old. After these three stages the body is finished, and it dies. What remains is the spirit. Depending upon the sum total of its good works, the spirit can be said to be "brim". "Brim means pure, good, and righteous. We say "Om Sri Brim!" The three stages I mentioned are of the body. The fourth is Advedi, it is of the spirit. [24/5/82]

Satruga's apparent confusion over the usage of the word "advedi" perhaps serves to illustrate the far from straightforward philosophical issues which surround this topic.

A further analogy was introduced by Karna Bhagat when the subject was raised with him.

JNY - What are the four themes of the four stages of the satsang?

KARNA BHAGAT - These are the themes, or so they are named: "Parah", "Pasand", "Madah", and "Vekri".

JNY - What of Byanak?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT (in embarrassment) - Just forget what I have said in the past and listen to Karna Bhagat! He knows.

KARNA BHAGAT - "Byanak" is the term for the less serious themes which preceed the satsang proper. Of the names I gave you we say that "Parah" is the belly (he pointed to his navel), "Madah" is the chest, "Kant" is the neck, and "Vekri" is the head. But you must really listen to the satsang in full if you are to comprehend the themes in their completeness. [19/5/82]

Something which both analogies point to, and which is supported by all that has been said, is that the satsang is progressively more spiritual, proceeding upwards from the belly to the head, and onwards through life

and death to the release of the spirit. The greatest spiritual merit is, therefore, achieved by those who participate to the end, until the rays of the sunrise appear in the treetops, announcing the completeness of this corporate act of devotion.

#### IV. The Satsang and the Bhao Offering

Despite the varying theories given about the stages of the satsang, I was never given a satisfactory answer as to which was to contain the actual bhao offering and distribution. Generally, it tended to be offered towards midnight, the offering itself being known as "the doing of Om". Om is done, as with the food from the feast earlier on, by placing the bhao sweets upon a griddle of glowing dung coals, anointing them with ghi, and setting them alight. This act is performed by a bhagat, and while it is being done the "Arthi" is sung, which is a hymn specific to this rite. (In Gujarat "arati" is the incense offered to the effigy before it retires - Pocock 1973:116).

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - When we have a celebration or Bhao, and we give vas, then Parbhu Isu, as you say, or Bhagvan, Ram, Lakshman, as we say, for they are one and the same, come down to receive the vas.

JNY - What is vas?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Let me explain. It is written in the scriptures that there is a land where, if they are deserving according to their dharam, the saintly go when they die. It is the land of Bhagvan. There there is no food or drink, no night or day. And when we give vas, that is to say, when we burn our offering of bhao, burn incense, or offer ghi, etc., then they take this vas and it makes them happy.

And so, when we give bhao, Bhagvan comes and is with us for the length of the satsang and shares in the vas. It makes him happy, you see. [14/5/82]

The burning of the bhao in the doing of Om, then, guarantees the presence of Ishvar, while its distribution guarantees the participation of the guests in His worship. Once Om has been done and the Arthi has been sung, the kotwar is summoned. He comes with a bowl, or basin, and the presiding bhagat fills it with the bhao sweets. The kotwar then stands and shouts three times, in a voice that all can hear:

Bhao is coming round,  
If you have a love of bhao  
then take of it, oh!

KARAM MAYANI - When bhao is given at a satsang then we say, "Receive this, if you are still awake." (I.e., if a guest is awake enough to offer his/her outstretched palms to receive the bhao.) It is a matter of love. It is Ishvar's bhao which you are being offered, and you must show your worthiness by remaining awake for it. Those with no care fall asleep. [23/2/82]

We have seen that, despite being set in opposition to each other, the bhagat and the bhopa tend to share certain patterns of action which convey similar meanings. In the same manner there are certain parallels between the corporate acts of eating the bhao sweets, and of eating meat.

JNY - When a man kills a chicken, then he does pap. Is this pap shared by those who eat the chicken?

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Yes, that is how it is. For do they not each take a small piece of pap when they eat it?

JNY - What, then, is shared with bhao?

JARI - That is different. At a Bhao we eat a consecrated offering.

RAMZI - Yes, "We receive in our hands what we receive together." Bhao is given into your hands, you see, and is a thing of dharam. [22/2/82]

We see a similar structure in the perceived consequences of sharing meat and of sharing bhao. Pap is shared in meat, dharam is shared in bhao, that is, the dharam of the host's offering. By sharing in the sanctified offering, the guests bless Ishvar, who blesses them, and their host, in turn. Similarly, by appreciating the hymns of devotion, not to mention the feast - with which Om has been done also, the guests share in the worship of Ishvar, thereby adding to their own dharam. The most dharam, however, is credited to the one who has made all this possible, the host.

## V. The Satsang in Practice

Two satsang will now be described in detail. The first was a smaller affair, not a full Bhao, held at the house of Lakshman Bhagat, where Deyalu Bhagat had been invited to sing hymns of praise. It was attended by fellow villagers only, and there was no feast preceeding it. In contrast, the second was a full Bhao, held at the house of Mothi Akhiyani, with many guests, many bhagat, and feasting in the evening and in the following morning. It is noticeable that, whereas in the satsang at Lakshman Bhagat's there was much effort made to teach those listening, the satsang at Mothi's was more of a performance. The former was attended mainly by initiates, and hosted by a bhagat, the latter by a more general cross section of Kori, and hosted by one whose life as a farmer left him little time for the disciplines of Bhakti.

### - Satsang at the House of Lakshman Bhagat

Lakshman's son, Huzo, came round the village at about eight thirty in the evening inviting everyone, but especially the menfolk, to come and share the "Pataha Bhao" (Pataha - sweets made from white sugar) at his hamlet that night. Deyalu, the bhagat from Kube (a local town), had come and was to sing.

At 9:30, after a cup of tea, we all moved down to the mats which had been laid out in the clearing in front of Ramzi's house. Deyalu was seated upon quilts, facing west. Lakshman Bhagat, Ramzi, and various enthusiasts sat around him, and the rest of us made ourselves at home a little further away - it was murmured that if one was to listen then it was better not to sit too close. Three or four women, including Jari, sat on a mat behind Deyalu. (Pocock - 1973:141 - finds the segregation of the sexes to be a reform instituted by the sect of Swami Narayan in Gujarat).

Nilo Kotwar was present, as was Rano Akhiyani with his waterpot upon which he was to beat out a rythmm, and there were young and old with small hand cymbals (kashiya). The harmonium was tuned and at last all was ready. Deyalu, having stretched his lungs, and exercised our ears and minds with several shalok, launched into his hymns. Lakshman Bhagat fanned him respectfully, while Ramzi looked keen - with one eye on Lakshman Bhagat, his father-in-law, to make sure he did not overstep himself.

Having finished the hymn amid resounding cries of "Vah! Vah!", and "Well sung!", Deyalu explained what he had been singing. As he finished his teachings, Huzo returned from Seyyidpur where he had been sent on his motorcycle to fetch a hand drum. Great lengths are gone to to ensure that bhagat have the necessary musical instruments, for there is a desire to avoid anything which would detract from the satsang itself. Rano tuned the drum to the organ while Nilo took over on the waterpot. Eventually it was Deyalu who himself completed the tuning, while Nilo kept us entertained with his sharp wit.



Eventually everything was in order, and the singing continued. Five hymns were sung, each preceded by one or more of the various shalok listed below, which Deyalu explained as he went along. The hymns themselves remained incomprehensible, and not only to me. They were sung mainly in Hindi.

The shalok were introduced with an acknowledgement of their composer, e.g. "So and so says..." The following are the explanations which I understood.

DEYALU BHAGAT - Guru Nanak says that if you were to take one thousand rupees and buy bhao to be offered so as to increase your dharam, this would be of no use to you in this life. For your dharam only helps towards improving the condition of your ziv in a future life. But if you follow a guru, then, through his teaching, you will have peace, happiness, and a wholeness of spirit in your present life also. ...

Tulsi Das says that if a man gives an offering for dharam then, when he dies, he will enter heaven, and will also be remembered on earth. But those who are not generous will soon be forgotten. ...

Mahatma Ji says that everyone, even Meghvar - you know how the occupation of the Meghvar is a little low because of its very nature (nods and murmurs of agreement) - if even a Meghvar comes to me with pure intentions, I will be his teacher. ...

Mahatma Ji says that there was once a man who was a drunkard. He came drunk to his guru for teaching. The guru cursed him for being drunk, and not fully obedient to his teachings. So the drunkard left and, meeting a fellow drunkard, they drank more.. Then they decided to go for a swim. So they took off their clothes and bathed in the river. As they bathed they played about, and soon their play developed into a brawl. There were reeds growing by the riverbank, and each of them seized one, split it, and stabbed the other to death. It was in this manner that the trident was first used, and such is the fate of drunkards. ...

Kabir says that .. (there followed a story which illustrated the way misfortune befalls those who eat meat). ...

Kabir says that what good are the stones and idols which you believe in? You offer them sacrifices, and worship them in elaborate ritual. But when do they ever speak from their mouth, saying, "May thou be blessed!?" It is better rather to follow a sadhu (ascetic) or a saint. For they can say, "I will pray for you so that you will live in contentment". ...

Once, in the rain season, there was a weaver bird. You all will know how cleverly they build their nests? Just so, this weaverbird built himself a house and lived in it. Then one day it rained, and was windy and cold. Along came a monkey, and sat outside, shivering.

"Look at you!" the weaverbird said. "You have hands, feet, arms, legs. And yet you do not build yourself a shelter. It is your own fault that you are sitting there shivering."

And the monkey thought, "How right he is. And here I am, a monkey, and having my own laziness pointed out to me by a weaverbird."

This is how it is in this world. Those who are lazy will live in dukh, while those who are hard working will live in sukh. ...

Mahatma Ji says that you should stay clear of those who are foolish and lazy. There are cities filled with such people. Instead, follow the saints, and live with them. For they will do satsang, and your "fruit" (deserts) depends on your worship. Worship the sadhu (ascetics)! Their very names, when spoken, constitute appropriate worship. ...

When it rains, rain falls down. If it falls into the mouth of a snake, the snake turns it into poison. If it falls into an oyster then, after six months, a pearl is produced. If it falls onto a tree, the tree produces flowers. So you see, the nature of the dish has a bearing upon the nature of that which it contains.

While the sixth hymn was being sung, Lakshman Bhagat offered the sweets in Om, pouring ghi over them on a griddle of hot coals, and setting them alight. Each time he spooned on more ghi he bowed to the flames and murmured, "Om Sri Om." In saying this he was joined by Ramzi.

Finally, Nilo Kotwar was called forward to distribute. He wrapped his head cloth around his head in respect and called three times for all to come and receive the bhao. He then distributed it. Everyone waited politely for Deyalu to give them permission to eat. He finished his hymn, rounding it off with the following exhortations, everyone joining him in each loud cry of "Je!" (Victory) :

Shout Mothi Ram's Je!  
Shout ... (various guru were named)!  
Shout Hans Nirvan's Je!  
Shout the Sanatan Dharam's Je!  
Shout Krishna Bhagvan's Je!  
Om Sri Om Sri Om....

The gathering then munched and chatted while a second round of tea was produced. Karna Bhagat and another guest offered Deyalu sweets from their own portion - a sign of love (prem).

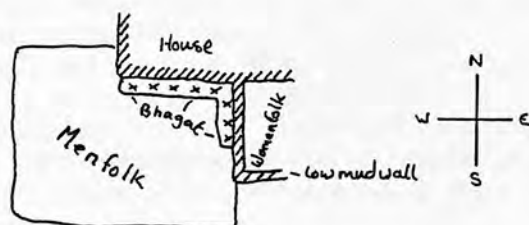
I left soon after. Various men had stretched out to sleep, but the singing went on until only a few hours of darkness remained. Jari chided me the following day, saying that, because I had been tired, I had missed the best hymns. [15/5/82]

We can see in the teachings of Deyalu many of the fundamental precepts of Bhakti. The value of the guru, the openness of the guru to all who wish teaching, the benefits of having a guru, these are all stressed repeatedly. In addition we are told not to value worldly wealth, not to drink, not to eat meat, not to be lazy, not to waste time in the worship of idols, and to lead a simple life. Finally, Deyalu emphasises that our lifestyle is a reflection of our true nature.

- Satsang at the House of Mothi Akhiyani

Whereas Lakshman Bhagat's satsang had the serenity of a gathering of the faithful, the satsang at the Bhao of Mothi Akhiyani had the atmosphere and excitement of a pop concert. This was chiefly because Dharmu Bhagat was to be one of the guests.

The singing began at about nine thirty on the evening. The bhagat sat in the breeze, on their cushioned quilts against the walls of Pansa's house. The men sat facing them on overlapping rush mats in the clearing where the animals were usually tethered. The women sat behind the bhagat, and behind a low wall in Mothi's uthak -



Buta Bhagat was the first to sing. His zeal was great although his reputation was not. He sang his way through eight hymns - each hymn will last on average from between ten and fifteen minutes - making up for his small talents with his large enthusiasm. In reality he served to fill in the time while Dharmu Bhagat snoozed on his quilts and the other "big" bhagat paid their evening visit to the fields following their heavy meal of rotlo and rice. Buta's singing was more a "warm up". Everyone waited for the "big" bhagat to begin.

Sitting in Arjan's nearby uthak, Bapu explained one of Buta's hymns to me. The essential message was that we should become a guru's selo. We were all to die eventually, and there was no safe passage to be had other than through a guru. The refrain was -

Nothing strike home (are as effective)  
as do the teachings of a guru  
in freeing you of your burdens.

Buta was tolerated with good humour, but the longer he went on, the sooner the gathering hoped he would finish. Comments such as, "Who knows how many more he may wish to sing?" began to be heard. At a Bhao held nearby earlier that year Nilo Kotwar had described Buta jokingly as the "harcha (rabid) bhagat".

Eventually he finished. Tea was served. Then Dharmu took the "stage". The drum was tuned while Buta mixed up a pipe of tobacco and cannabis resin for the drummer who insisted upon it for his inspiration. Cassette recorders materialised with their attendants. The space in front of the bhagat became crowded. The older among them sat back to listen while Dharmu ceremoniously buttoned up his cuffs.

Then, with the drummer on his left, and Mera Bhagat, the third member of his group, on his right playing the waterpot, an instrumental number was struck up. Those who knew Dharmu explained that, as a rule, he preceded his hymn singing with four such instrumental pieces.

Dharmu was a perfectionist. His dress was neat and fashionable. His hair was well oiled and combed back. His notes were precise. He appeared, to the impartial onlooker, to have a slightly stilted and pompous bearing. On their completion, each of his numbers was cheered: "Vah! Vah!", Dhankar! Dhankar!", "Dharmu! Dharmu!" Dharmu smiled back at his following, who were mainly young men. The older bhagat waited patiently - they were once young themselves.

At last Dharmu sang. His voice was deep and rich, and his eyes searched to and fro continuously for attention and approval. The percussionists kept perfect time. Not one note of Dharmu's harmonium was played in mistake, not one thump of the drum was out of place. Perfection, pleasing to the ear. Cries of praise and delight rang out whenever there was a pause.

Four hymns were sung. One of these, on its completion, inspired Devi Dah, who was seated nearby among the bhagat, to expand its message to the gathering. It told of the fish, living in water but unable to drink, comparing its state with that of the ignorant and uninitiated. The hymns were faithfully recorded. In the days that followed they would be heard playing constantly and simultaneously in separate village houses until their novelty wore off or they were replaced by a more recent recording.

Mera Bhagat then took over and sung three hymns. He sang old favourites, which were enjoyed in a more relaxed way. His third hymn was the Arthi, and several others, mostly recognised bhagat, joined in with the singing while Om was done. The bhao was distributed by Nilo Kotwar, who then joked with Devi Dah about how many had received bhao, how much was left, and how much he should be given himself, as it was the custom that the kotwar's portion should be given to him by the officiating bhagat on the completion of his duty. Everyone was amused by the exchange.

Dharmu Bhagat then remounted his throne and sang once more, a doctored cigarette being prepared for his drummer, who puffed and played one-handed without pause. We sat spellbound, but then, on the completion of the hymn and when the cheers had died down, Devi Dah raised an objection. The tune to which the hymn had been sung was a "Sorti" tune, and should not have been sung at that particular time and with those particular words. Devi Dah explained his objection in full.

Dharmu Bhagat, a practiced orator, made plans for his defence whilst the second round of tea arrived and was passed round. Then, having drunk his tea, he launched himself into the fray. His general tone was one of respect, but there was a hint of the patronising, explaining the matter to an older man who was past his prime. His whole presentation was as of a lecturer reading from his thesis.

DHARMU BHAGAT - O Great one, you are a widely loved and respected teacher, and you have taught our people much wisdom. I was barely born when you were already a great bhagat, and I am in no position to contradict you or hold to anything with which you might disagree, for you are much older and wiser than me.

Nevertheless, I must state what I have learned through the teachings of others and through my own reading. Sri Hans Sahib made no ruling on the tunes that were to be used. Does the shalok not say -



First comes love,  
second comes destiny  
third comes discipline  
fourth comes the tune.

Now, in the days of Sri Hans Sahib there were no harmonium. He himself played the tanpura. Therefore the tunes which he used need not necessarily be those which go well with the harmonium.

Before Devi Dah could interrupt the flow of words, as he had been trying to do within the constraints of being good mannered, Dharmu subtly altered the theme of the discussion to one which Devi Dah could not disagree on.

DHARMU BHAGAT - How long has the harmonium been in use here among us? When did it first arrive?

DEVI DAH - How well I remember. It was Bapu Das who first owned one, and we all wondered at it, for we had never seen the like.

DHARMU BHAGAT - We have only possessed harmonium since 1960. Before then we did not even know what they were. In the early days our people earned their living chopping wood, or lifting earth on their heads in metal basins (i.e. as labourers in the building of canals). We were poor then. No one knew the meaning of anything, especially words like "Sorti". Now look at us! We have drums, harmonium, tanpura, kashiya. We have beds to sit on, and we even have recorders to tape hymns on.

DEVI DAH - Yes, I remember the first time my voice was ever recorded. I thought that someone was speaking from inside a pipe. I got such a fright (he chuckled at the memory). But I know what it is that you are saying. It used to be that people followed the true path of Bhakti. Now they have become over-confident, and they go their own way.

DHARMU BHAGAT - A short time ago I met with four other bhagat for a satsang. They were ....

Here Dharmu did a bit of name-dropping. The gathering murmured approval of the names, aware of what Dharmu was doing and fully enjoying the exchange. Throughout the discussion Dharmu had been constantly cheered on by his followers.

Devi Dah remained friendly and unruffled...

DEVI DAH - Yes indeed! The importance of people meeting together for satsang can never be stressed enough.

DHARMU BHAGAT - One of these bhagat, (I did not catch the name), spoke of how he had just been very ill. So ill was he that he had to be taken to Kunri Hospital. There, as he lay on his bed, he became aware of the pap which lay heavily upon our people, and of their ignorance of the path of Bhakti.

DEVI DAH - Yes, how true it is. People have become cocky. But we must never neglect the true path of Bhakti. Now, whose turn is it to sing...



Dharmu had one more to sing himself. When he had finished an old bhagat cried out "Shout Sanatan Dharam's Je!", and everyone joined in with the "Je!". He called out other names, finishing with that of the host, Mothi.

Dharmu Bhagat was followed by one Karshi Bhagat, who was enthusiastic but had a weak voice. Dharmu stood up meantime, stretched his legs, and then settled down rudely to sleep. Bhima Bhagat had already begged to be excused from singing as his voice was not in very good condition.

After Karshi had sung it was, at last, the turn of Devi Dah himself. He played the tanpura well, picking out the melody as one would on a sitar. He was much loved, but by then only the spiritually minded were still awake, for it was nearly three in the morning.

After Devi Dah, the lesser bhagat kept the hymns going until Buta Bhagat regained the stage and carried on until well after sunrise, with the others asleep or dozing. [3/6/82]

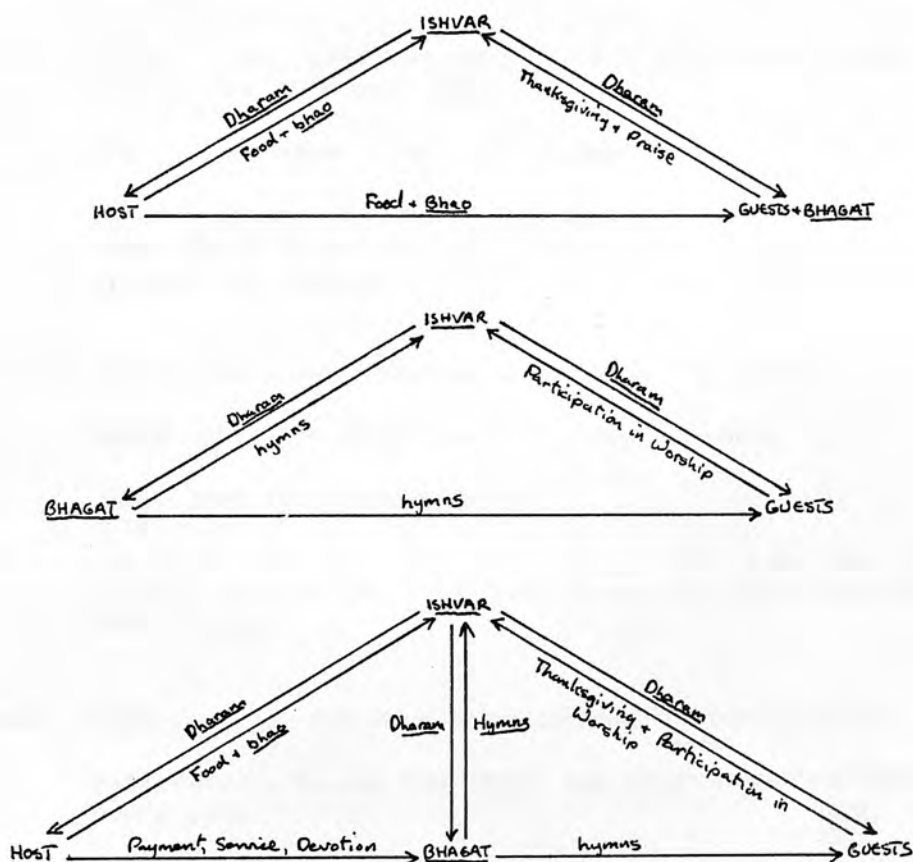
Many striking contrasts are apparent between the satsang at Lakshman Bhagat's and the one at Mothi's. The former was attended by the spiritually minded, the learned; the latter was attended by a more general cross section of Kori. The emphasis of the former was on teaching, whereas in the latter it was on performing, at least in the case of Dharmu Bhagat. The teachings in the former emphasised the need for a guru as one who could counter pap by showing the true path of dharam. In the latter dharam was seen to be achieved through the ritual of the Bhao itself, rather than through the person of the bhagat - dharam was to be achieved by listening, but not necessarily by learning.

Dharmu Bhagat in a way symbolises this softening and popularising of Bhakti doctrine. He was tacitly opposed by Devi Dah, and many of the conflicting trends brought on by the changing Kori lifestyle and the pressure this was bringing to bear upon Kori beliefs were voiced openly. It is, nevertheless, worth noting that, while it is traditional for the more respected bhagat to sing at the more respected hour, as was the case with Devi Dah, Dharmu Bhagat used this in his own favour. For, although the spiritually minded waited up to hear Devi Dah, they were few in number, whereas the many who were less spiritually minded did enjoy Dharmu's performance before they fell asleep. And in the days that followed it was Dharmu's singing which remained most in their memories and was reinforced by the tape recordings - for by three in the morning even the batteries of the tape recorders had lost their charge.

## VI. The Purpose of the Bhao

The reasoning behind the holding of the Bhao appears to be fairly straightforward and has already been touched upon. The host feeds the guests, arranges for hymns to be sung, and offers bhao. This is all done in Ishvar's name and for His glory. In return, the guests eat the food, drink the tea, listen to the music, and accept the bhao, and glorify Ishvar. The bhagat glorify Ishvar for what they have received, and also glorify Him in their hymns of praise. Ishvar, in return, awards dharam to the guests, who have honoured Him in their participation, to the bhagat, who have honoured Him in their participation and in the praises they have sung, and, most of all, to the host, who has made all this possible through his/her sacrifice of wealth and service.

(In discussing Vedic rites, Heesterman - 1964, from Van der Veen 1972 - sees the food and gifts offered at the sacrificial feast to be representing the deadness (impurity) of the sacrificer. The doctrines of the Pushti Marga sect of Gujarat also enabled the achievement of merit through the display of wealth - Pocock 1973:117).



There is, however, a further aspect in the holding of the Bhao, for, although organised and paid for by the host, it is not always the case that this has been done to increase the dharam of the host directly. (Here we are not discussing the Bhao held specifically at the funeral - see 6.4 below.)

For what purpose, then, was Mothi's Bhao supposedly held?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Mothi gives the Bhao for the dharam of his father. His father lived mainly with Buro (Bhopa), and only came to stay with Mothi near his death. Then he became very ill, and said that he ached all over. He died soon after.

All three brothers help with the Bhao. But Mothi is well off, and he contributes the money. It is the custom, if a man is wealthy, that he hold a Bhao once a year. [3/6/82]

Here we see a paradox. If the Bhao is held for the sake of the dharam of the deceased, why is it the custom for all wealthy Kori to hold them? Is it done for the sake of the fathers and forefathers of the rich?

PANSA AKHIYANI - The Bhao is held in Ishvar's name, in happiness (celebration).

JNY - But, what of the Bhao held for your father Mothi's father?

PANSA - Yes, that was held in Dada (FF) Bachu's name. We hold a Bhao and remember him.

JNY - Who, then, gains the dharam?

PANSA - I do not know. Only Ishvar will know whether it will be Dada Bachu or us who will receive the dharam. Yet, during the satsang, the bhagat do cry, "Shout Bachu Ram's Je!" [8/6/82]

Karam Mayani had more definite opinions on the matter.

KARAM MAYANI - It is given in Ishvar's name.

JNY - But for whose dharam?

KARAM - The ziv of Pansa's dada (FF) will have the dharam written against its name, for it was for this that the Bhao was held. [9/6/82]

Dadi Zatu's opinions also have some bearing on our discussion.

DADI ZATU - People hold Bhao for their deceased family members every year.

JNY - Why? Who does this benefit?

DADI ZATU - It benefits themselves, ofcourse! ... (Later she complicated matters further...) It is held for the sake of the person who is deceased. Such a person will be asked (by the Dharam Raza), "What has been given in your name?" And if a Bhao has been so given, that person's ziv will benefit. [14/7/81]

When Lavi Dungarani was asked who Mothi was holding his Bhao for, his answer was straightforward and to the point.

LAVI DUNGARANI - Mothi is giving it for his own dharam.

JNY - You yourself held a Bhao a week ago. Who was that for?

LAVI - I gave my Bhao for the sake of my own ziv, and for no one else. It was so that I will not become ill, and so that Ishvar will remove my breath from me quickly (i.e., allow a quick death for me), so that my ziv will not suffer pain, and so that I will be reborn in sukh, that is, in a high caste. If I were papi I would be reborn into a low caste. [3/6/82]

In Lavi's case there was no room for doubt. He had a clear idea of who benefitted from the Bhao he held: himself.

So far we have found two explanations for Bhao being held. To some, the Bhao is held so as to increase the dharam of its host. To others, it is given to increase the dharam, and thereby improve the condition, of the ziv of the deceased in whose name it is given. Arguably, however, the latter would also result in the dharam of the host being increased, as Bozo sensibly pointed out.

BOZO AKHIYANI - When someone dies then a Bhao, or a Kharas, must be given. This is done for their ziv, so that it can depart (see 6.4 below). After this, people often give a Bhao in the deceased person's name, be they a brother, or a father, or a husband. These Bhao are not given for the dharam of the deceased, but for the dharam of the giver. The name of the deceased is taken, and bhao is shared. Then the ziv of the deceased sees all the money which has been spent in his name, and intercedes with Ishvar on the behalf of the ziv of the giver, thus increasing the giver's dharam. [7/6/82]

What Bozo was describing appears to be the process whereby ancestors are transformed into satiya.

JNY - Are ancestors worshipped at all?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - No, not unless they were exceptionally good people, as was the case with Rama Patel. If ever there is a big feast, Radhu (Akhiyani - Rama's son) offers some food at his grave. Otherwise people make no offerings to ancestors at all,

and we have no such traditions.

JNY - Are Bhao not held for one's ancestors?

LAKSHMAN - Yes, Bhao are held so that ancestors may have a nice place to live after death. [17/12/81]

Any question as to whether Bhao are held altruistically for the sake of the ziv of the deceased person alone can be dealt with once and for all if we examine who the deceased are in whose name Bhao tend to be held, for they are never women.

JNY - Apart from at their funeral, are Bhao ever held for women?

HADHU VEAN - No, a Bhao is held only once for a woman. For a man it can be held many times. [7/6/82]

(Curiously, the notion of a woman circling the wedding fire tended to be met with a similar response, as shall be seen in 6.2 below.)

JNY - Can a woman hold a Bhao for the ziv of her deceased husband?

LAVI DUNGARANI - Yes, and many do this. Dadi Zati used to hold a Bhao once a year for her husband after he had died.

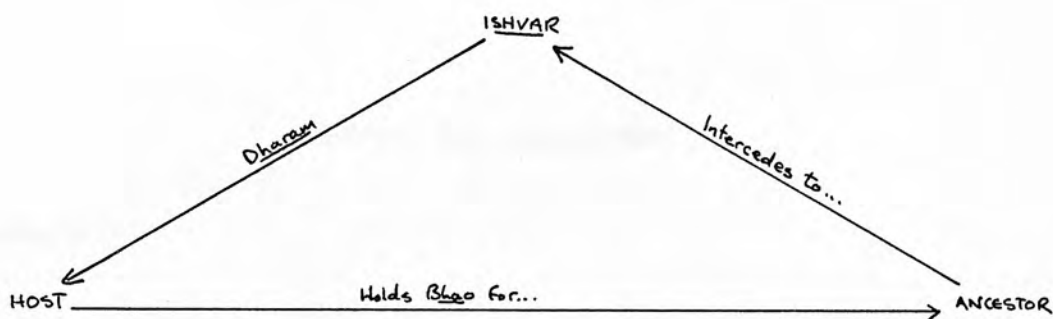
JNY - Is it possible to hold a Bhao for one's wife?

LAVI - No! [3/6/82]

Although they may be highly regarded, women are lower than men in status, occupying a rank of their own within the Kori caste. If they lead lives of dharam they may be reborn men, whereas if men lead lives of pap there is a danger that they may be reborn women. The ziv of a man is therefore more influential than that of a woman (although there are exceptions - e.g. Ram Bai), and, as it is only fathers, grandfathers, and husbands for whom Bhao are held, it can be deduced that they are held so that the more influential ziv of those deceased will intercede on the host's behalf with Ishvar so that his/her dharam may be increased. Otherwise why would Bhao not be held for the sake of the ziv of deceased mothers, grandmothers, and wives also?

A further loop, then needs to be added to our diagram.





It is inevitable, given the diversity of explanations which draw upon the spiritual, that others can also be found for why people are motivated to hold Bhao. The following conversation occurred as we sat in Arjan's uthak, watching the satsang begin at Mothi's.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - What is the point of all this expense? What good does it do anyone?

BAPU AGISANI - Yes, I agree. In Mirpur a tenant was once holding a Bhao. He asked his landlord for a loan to cover his expense, and the landlord said the very same thing. "It would be better", he said, "to give to those who are in need, to the daughters of the village, or to the family that is poor. All that will happen at your Bhao will be that a lot of big men will come, will eat, and will go home again. What will have been achieved?"

ARJAN - It is the same here. How much money is spent? One, two, even three thousand rupees? And for what? So that a man may make a name for himself. [3/6/82]

If such cynicism is to be carried further, it could be argued that, as it is only the rich who can afford to hold Bhao, it is only their dharam, as well as their prestige, which will benefit, or alternatively, that it is

only the dharam of their ancestors which is increased. By this logic, if you are a poor man with poor sons, there is little chance of you being made a saint. If you are a woman from a poor family your chances are even less. But then, who is to say which ancestors fade from memories, and which remain? It will be interesting, for example, to see how long the memory of Ram Bai, an exception of sorts, will last.

## SECTION 3.5: CONCLUSIONS

### I. Summary

In this chapter our focus has been on how the Kori perceive life after death, and the impact this has on their lifestyle. Central to our study has been their premise that the ziv undergoes numerous cycles of rebirth, the nature of each cycle being determined by the life led in the previous one. The aim of individuals in their current lives is perceived to be that of engineering a good rebirth. This involves their manipulation of a cosmic mechanism, which, although operated under Ishvar's supervision, depends upon the relative pap and dharam accumulated by individuals in their lifetimes. It is their aim, therefore, to ensure that their dharam outweighs their pap. This would guarantee a better rebirth. A perfect life of dharam guarantees mugti - release from the rebirth cycle.

The question, then, which effects the individuals' day to day existence, becomes how to ensure that their dharam outweighs their pap. The "True Path" of dharam is much sought after, knowledge of which is seen to be found in Ishvar Himself. This knowledge can be obtained directly, for example in a dream of enlightenment, but is more usually made available within the scriptures, which are revelations of Ishvar. The Kori thus recognise the validity of Islam (and Christianity) as a "true path" of dharam. Nevertheless, in terms of access to Ishvar's truth, a further option is present. This is Bhakti, where the guru plays a dual role as, firstly, dispenser of knowledge gained through a lifetime of devotion to Ishvar and, secondly, as Ishvar's mediator, exercising His power and wisdom and being able, on His behalf, to absolve pap.

The knowledge and power of Bhakti, however, is not available to everyone, but only to those who, through their individual initiation, have entered into a guru/selo relationship with their teacher. Thus, we see an inner and outer circle in Kori society with regard to Bhakti, something which was highlighted in our comparison of the two satsang. Bhagat may form a respected and influential core in Kori society, but not all Kori adhere to or fully understand the doctrines of Bhakti.

## II. Underlying Themes

Certain forces of influence have come to our attention in the course of this chapter which are worth mentioning, especially so, as they will recur often in the course of this study. The first has already been mentioned in Chapter 1. This is the irony that, despite their pride in their own beliefs and traditions, these are often described with a sideways glance at those of their Muslim neighbours.

Hindu scriptures are revered as a source of Ishvar's truth. Nevertheless, as Bharat Patel said, "The Muslims have the Koran and we have the Gita". One of the first decrees of Hans Nirvan when he institutionalised Bhakti within Kori society was, in the words of Lakshman Bhagat, "not to eat with Muslims". Lakshman's annual period of fasting was compared favourably with the Muslims' observance of Ramadan by Ramzi Mahaleyo, as were the general daily rites observed by Bhakti initiates. Satruga Bhagat spoke scornfully of the Sindi's lack of belief in Bhakti which appealed to the spirit of man and not to his sinful nature.

Although, when such comparisons are made, it is inevitable that the Kori beliefs emerge in the more favourable light, the fact remains that those of the Sindi have a profound influence on those of the Kori, for the former are constantly held up as the yardstick by which the latter are measured.

The second force appeared when we contrasted the sharing of bhao sweets with the sharing of meat. In the case of the former, dharam is gained by all who participate, whereas with the latter, all who eat of it are tainted with the pap of its killing. When it is considered that Devipuza (the worship of gods/goddesses) almost inevitably involves sacrifice,

the inherent conflict between Devipuza and Bhakti can be perceived. This will be explored more fully in Chapter 5. Despite this conflict, however, it was interesting to note the parallel structures in the guru/selo and bhopa/selo relationships.

When we studied the relationship between the sati, the avtari, and the guru, we saw the progressive assimilation of the meanings of these terms. The divinity of avtari such as Rama and Krishna, was played down, and instead their status as satiya - men to whom Ishvar had given special ilim - was highlighted. The guru was also acknowledged as being one possessing special ilim from Ishvar, with which he guides his selo along the true path of dharam. Indeed, as one who can absolve pap, the guru is worshipped as Ishvar Himself.

Whereas worship offered to satiya is an institutional part of Bhakti ritual, so too is the holding of Bhao, whereby the name of a well-respected ancestor (guru) is honoured by worship and offering, for the benefit in dharam of all who participate. Here we encounter a third influential force, for Bhao are elaborate affairs and only the well-off can afford to host them. The well-respected ancestors of the rich are therefore being gradually elevated to the position of satiya, while those of the poorer Kori fade away into ignomy. The increased affluence of the Kori has profoundly affected both their way of life, and the way they perceive life. We shall return to this theme in chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 4: SURVIVING THE PRESENT

We have looked in the preceding chapter at the constraints which the Kori perception of the individual's future places upon his or her life in the present. In this and the next chapter we shall focus on the present itself, and examine the forces at large in the world which the Kori must strive to control to ensure ~~their~~ continued well-being; forces which are more immediate, real, and identifiable.

### SECTION 4.1: THE BODY - KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, AND POWER

#### I. The Life-force

We have already come across the concept of the ziv, which leaves the body on death and gives life to another in its rebirth. The ziv is bound up with the life cycle. It is the life force which is given form in the body. But the ziv is not necessarily human.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Animals have ziv just as we do. Although we are humans and they are animals, our ziv are the same. [8/5/82]

It is noteworthy in a world of caste where everything which lives is classified in terms of its relative status, (see Sharma 1978b), that the life forces of all creatures are homogeneous in their nature. It is in their interaction with each other and with the things of the world that they become differentiated.

The ziv cannot be seen as synonymous with the Panjabi word, "jivan" (alive). The following episode from the story of Rama Pir illustrates the distinction. Rama Pir is intervening where robbers have murdered one of his pilgrims.

BHARAT PATEL - Then Rama Pir said to the woman, "Take the head of your husband, wrap it in a cloth, and place it back on top of his body!" No sooner was this done than the ziv returned to him. [29/8/81]



The pilgrim did not become alive again, his life returned to him. Ziv is not an analogy for the living body. It may be necessary for <sup>life</sup> for, but it is also an entity in its own right.

DADI ZATI - When a person dies, then a Bhao must be held. If it is a child who has died then the Bhao is held after two or three days. Up until the time of the Bhao the spirit (athma) of the deceased roams about the hamlet. When the Bhao is given, the way to Ishvar is opened and the spirit departs. If nothing is given the spirit remains and becomes a ghost, causing trouble. [14/7/81]

The ziv is not totally formless, but is recognised as having perceptible physical qualities. Babu Paji, Zavo's son, was involved in an accident. He had gone, along with several of the young men of the village, on Bharat's tractor trailer to Mirpur Khas, where its load of corn stalks was to be sold as animal fodder. The trailer was well loaded and they were all sitting on top of it when a tyre burst and it toppled over on its side. Babu had suffered a severe winding, which at the time had convinced his companions that he had breathed his last. We called in after dusk to see how he was and Haku, his mother, related to us what had happened. Judging by the eloquence with which she told the tale she had had plenty of practice already.

HAKU (w/o Zavo) - Babu had been asleep in a quilt right on top of the trailer. When it toppled over he fell to the ground and about twenty to thirty mond of corn stalks landed on top of him. He was pulled free but was not breathing. His ziv had risen to his head and then left him for heaven.

Those who were with him cried out in dismay, but Bozo (Akhiyani) cursed violently. "You seducer of sisters!" he cried. "You have died whilst in my keeping. Now what am I to say to your parents?"

They all called upon Ishvar, pleading with him to have mercy. The ziv then returned and he breathed again. [3/1/81]

The ziv, as a concept, is linked with breath. It is said to reside in the heart.

HUZO AKHIYANI - Your heart (hiyo) is here (pointing). It is from your heart that your ziv flies away. We have a saying: "My ziv was about to fly away, so I clutched my heart". [6/3/82]

The heart is also the home of breath. Dadi Zatu clearly demonstrates the connection between the two.

DADI ZATU - Breath comes in your mouth, and down your throat, and circles around in this part of your body (she indicated her upper abdomen). That is breath's house, just as we have houses

to live in. Then it comes out, wanders about, and returns again. It is our ziv. ... When you stop taking breaths, then your breath has left you, your ziv has left you. If you have a ziv then you have a body. If you have no ziv then your body has no purpose, it is just dust. [8/3/82]

Certain illnesses are conceived of in these terms also. The logic of their conception thus suggests their remedy.

DADI ZATI - Gomi's boy, Pansa, has been struck by tan (Gomi = her DHZ). That is why she did not come to the Bhao. Do you not remember when Nena (her DD) was small and had tan? She was like this: (Dadi Zati clenched her fists and screwed up her face as if in agony). Tan is something which injections cannot help much. Your ziv has risen to the top of your head and you must pour water on it and massage it to persuade it to go back down again. [26/8/81]

Another dangerous malady, the perception of which is dictated by this fickle nature of the ziv, is possession.

DADI ZATU - The heart, as we have said, is where the breath stays. It is the house of the ziv. That is where a demon can come and live too!. [8/3/82]

The elusive presence of the spirit is again perceived of in physical terms as breath. To be possessed is to "have the wind rise in you". This is something which Babu's accident laid him open to, for the temporary absence of his ziv from his body was later to become the prime explanation for his recurring possession, something which will be examined later in this chapter.

Not only is there the danger that your ziv may leave your body and not return, or that it may be replaced by another in possession, but there is also the danger that it may be drawn out and stolen.

NENA (z/o Buro Mayani) - (Speaking of the death of Arjan Adi'hra's son.) They did not know what he died of, but, (she bent closer) it was a cannibal that took his ziv in the night. Cannibals come, and see beautiful newborn babies, and they blow on them and steal their ziv. This is why we never leave our babies alone for their first two months at least. There is always someone to keep watch. [1/9/81]

Although cannibals are seen more in terms of an "old wives' tale" than as a reality, Nena's words fit the concept of the ziv well. An explanation of dreaming also slips easily into the conceptual structure.

DADI ZATI - When we sleep our ziv leaves us and wanders around. You will know what dreams are like. You can see people and places of long ago, as well as of the present.

These explanations may arguably be opinions shared by not all Kori. Nevertheless, the overall association of the ziv with breath is a concept which is shared by all. Filliozat (1964), tracing the origins of Indian medicinal practice in the Vedas, notes that ayurvedic medicine is based upon three essential principles which are both cosmic and organic. These are represented as fire, water, and wind (ibid:56). Wind is the principle of activity (ibid:184), seen to be both the breath and the soul (ibid:66,218), and is the power which animates the body (ibid:66), "the common motor of the cosmic and individual lives" (ibid:72). We see from this that the Kori perception of the ziv shares much with the Hindu texts.

This concept of the ziv also illustrates how, while the functions of the external body parts - the hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. - are understood through direct experience of them, the function of the body's internal organs remains a puzzle, clues about which are continuously being pieced together.

## II. The Body

Knowledge of the existence of bodily organs is gained through contact with violent death, or with animals which are being butchered or sacrificed. Clues as to their functions, however, remain few and far between and stem mainly from their being connected with outward experience, or with illnesses which they are suspected of causing. A large number of bodily processes nevertheless remain beyond the scope of such experience, and this allows a certain amount of conjecture. Conjecture, for example, about the origins of milk.

BURO MAYANI - We are discussing milk. Where does it come from? What is it made from? Humans and animals produce it, but if you kill a goat and butcher it you will not find any milk in the way that you will find blood. And milk is not blood, for if you pour blood into your tea it would not be the same.

BIZAL MAYANI - But milk is essential for strength. It is what we humans, and animals, must have when we are born, and it is all that we live off of for the first one or two months of our lives. What else has such strength?

SHAVO BHOPA - Milk, I think, is made out of blood. But I do not really know. [1/9/81]

Let us briefly look at some opinions voiced about bodily organs, and some of the illnesses associated with them. We have already seen how the heart (hivo) is associated with breathing, being the house of the ziv. The association of breathing with the lungs, by comparison, is seldom acknowledged.

HUZO AKHIYANI - They say that the lungs lie half in a container of water. When the water dries up you get a cough and your lungs go bad. My condition is called "lumps of the lungs". (Huzo had bad chest trouble which returned every cold season.) There is badness in my lungs, and they give off a bad smell. [6/3/82]

JNY - What happens to food when it is eaten?

DADI ZATI - There is a machine of some sorts in the stomach which chops the food up. How else could it go in in big chunks and come out in soft lumps? The food goes through the stomach and comes out from the bottom. (She then gave some very graphic imitations of the act of defecation. She enjoyed being rude at times, something made excusable by her age.) [8/3/82]

The word pet (stomach) is used to refer to the whole of the abdomen. There is little differentiation beyond this term in day to day conversation. The vagueness about the different works carried out within the pet is well illustrated by the practice of the midwife, who blocks the mothers anus with a pad of cloth held firmly with the feet so as to prevent the baby using this as a means of exit.

JNY - We say that food goes into the pet. Yet the child is carried in the pet of the pregnant woman. Is this the same pet?

BAPU AGISANI - We have only one pet, but by Ishvar's devising it can perform separate functions. I do not know how. Ishvar knows. The pet of all humans are the same. Every living thing, be it man, goat, chicken, hare, whatever, has three things in its pet. These are the liver, the lungs, and the gallbladder. I do not know why they are there or what they do, but they are necessary.

The gallbladder (i.e. that of an animal) is good for those who suffer from dizziness. "Stones" is the condition where stones appear in your side (he indicated both sides of his lower abdomen). I do not know from where they come, but you need medicine to remove them.

The pet is one thing, but there are different areas within it. The pet of a goat, for example, has one part where the grass goes and one part where the water goes and which has a pumping system. Our stomachs are the same. Just as machines have various compartments for water, oil, and petrol, so it is with our pet. [30/4/82]

In contrast to the uncertainty as to the internal workings of the pet, the functions of the contents of the head are voiced with more conviction.

DADI ZATU - That which is contained within the skull is the brain (bezo). Have you not seen the brain of goats? It is white and resides inside the crown of the head. Sometimes, if you let that part of your head get cold, your brain is struck with cold and exudes white mucus which runs down and out of your nose. That is what happens when you are struck with a cold. It runs out so that you can get better.

JNY - What does the brain do?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - We do not know. Perhaps it is to do with growing the hair, or the head's ability to carry heavy loads. But we do know that it is necessary for life just as eyes, ears, nose, and feet are. [8/3/82]

DADI ZATU - Your brain is joined to your eyes, nose, and mouth to make up the one system. For when your eyes are bad does not your breath smell and your nose run? This has all come from your brain.

DADI ZATI - Yes. When you put mascara in your eyes does it not show up in your shit? It is all joined up in the one system. [15/3/82]

So far we have not seen the brain associated with body control or with thought. Bapu had something to say on this, however.

BAPU AGISANI - The stomachs of all humans are the same. Only their minds (magaz) differ, for do people not speak different languages?

Your mind is inside your skull. Your brain is round at the back. I do not know what your brain's function is, but I do know that it is necessary for life. For if your skull breaks open and it comes out you die.

Phlegm comes from inside the head. Where else could it come from? So does snot.

The heart is where your strength is. When we say that a man has a strong heart, then we are saying that he is strong.



Just as your eyes are responsible for seeing, so your tongue is responsible for speech. When someone cannot speak we say "the tongue will not go". But all these things are controlled by the head. [30/4/82]

In South West India Nichter comments upon the perception of an intrinsic connection between the body and the mind.

conceptualisations of a body-mind continuum means that the mind may be medically treated through the body and the body through the mind (1977:115).

To the Kori the mind, although important, is still seen as a physiological part of the body.

The head is also seen to store the man's semen. When discussing a man's potential fatherhood there are frequent allegoric references to his "orchard" (bhag), and just as frequent gestures to the head indicating where his "orchard" is to be found. (The word for "fate" is also bhag.)

One further concept needs to be mentioned here. This is the Kori idea of pain. We shall see later, when we study scorpion and snake bites, how pain is seen as their spirits at work in their victim. Pain is conceived of as an agent of illness and misfortune. This is well illustrated in the following description given by Dadi Zatu. She suffered from bad headaches every winter. She would clasp the top of her head and explain why.

DADI ZATU - It used to be what we call "advasi". It would be behind one eye, and it would come in the morning and leave by the evening. This is a dangerous pain, because sometimes it can come down into your eyes, and they go white and you are blinded. If you are more fortunate it descends into your teeth and makes them fall out. That is what happened to me.

Actually, what I did was rub cloves around my eyes, and this drove the pain around to the back of my head. It stayed there for a while, and then it climbed up to my crown. That is where it has remained, and each night during the cold season I have to massage my crown several times before I go to sleep. Otherwise my headache will return. [8/6/82]

We have briefly looked at the subjective reasoning used to explain the functions of bodily parts, and some of their malfunctions accompanied by possible means of cure. The Kori, however, make no secret of the fact that this is an area of which they have little knowledge, relying mainly on guesswork and experiment. While there are some indications of the

conceptual distinction found by Inden and Nicholas in Bengal between the Gross Body and the Subtle Body (Inden and Nicholas 1973:63), such categories were never overtly described by the Kori.

Similarly, no rationale based on the three Ayurvedic principles of wind (breath), fire (bile), and water (phlegm), was consciously utilised. (See, for examples, Filliozat 1964; McGilvray 1982b:49)

Not only do the Kori appear to have little knowledge of the internal workings of the body, there are also few illnesses which they directly relate to it. Explanations, rather, are found in the external world in which they live.

### III. Balance and Knowledge

Illness or misfortune, when they effect the daily lives of the Kori, tend to be rationalised and countered within the idiom of a concept of balance. (see also Nichter, 1977:180). To survive the present the Kori has to maintain the necessary balance. This could be, in our terms, balance within the physical domain, depending upon such things as foods consumed, or contact with impure and purifying agents. But balance must also include the spiritual. Enmity with animals, fellow humans, and spirits is to be avoided.

A similar situation exists in South West India where Nichter (1977:180) notes three main perceived causes of illness; imbalance in diet, external pathogenic agencies, and Karma. He finds that an illness may be attributed to one factor and then recategorised later due to the cause of the illness or the social environment of the afflicted. No contradiction of ideas need result, "because heterogeneous factors can cause similar illnesses" (Nichter 1977:180/181). This is some indication of the complexities faced by the Kori in diagnosing illness and prescribing its cure.

Balance is maintained with the use of knowledge: what foods to eat and when, what rites to perform and when, what offerings to make and to whom. Imbalance can be countered through a knowledge of the appropriate foods, rites, or offerings. Once again, therefore, we come

across the concept of ilim.

Knowledge which has been passed down as one of the general Kori traditions can be used by any Kori to restore balance. There are traditional cures for pain and illness just as there are traditional offerings with which to appease or thank the gods.

DADI ZATI - I have a bad back at the moment. I have already been to see Baya (her eldest daughter) twice, and will go again tomorrow. Baya is lambi - when the blood stops flowing from a woman we say she is "lambi" (i.e. post menopause).

MALI (w/o Arjan) - She can have no more children.

DADI ZATI - What she does is this. I lie down upon my stomach, and she takes a lump of rock salt and places it upon the tip of my backbone. Then she places her foot on top of it and steps over me. The salt is then replaced by another piece and she does it again, seven times in all, back and forth. This cure is called son satth. A woman who is not yet lambi cannot effect a cure.

MALI - But if you get backache and do not have son satth done, then no amount of doctor's injections will take away the pain.

DADI ZATU - Another cure is this. I have seen it done. You have to bend right over forward from a standing position. A brick is then placed on a cloth pad on top of your backbone, and this is struck with a grain pestle.

MALI - What!

DADI ZATU - I'm being perfectly serious, you know. [2/9/81]

An example of reasoning based on the notion of balance is simply, but profoundly, illustrated in the following common cure for fever.

ZAVO PAJI - If you have a fever you can do a son by burning yourself with hot coals, or hot flour. This is to scare the fever away. [3/6/82]

There are many other examples of traditional cures which are common knowledge. Where these are ineffective, however, explanations are available elsewhere, as is the power to cure. Where knowledge is known to be more powerful, and therefore more sought after, more effort is made to keep it hidden. True knowledge, that is ilim, is from Ishvar.

RAMSHI VARESA - Ilm is from Ishvar. It is writing.

JNY - Who writes it?

RAMSHI - I do not know. Who knows? [3/5/81]

Ilim gives you greater control of your body.

BURO MAYANI - The Munge are the beggars who come around the villages. They bring long iron needles with them, and if you do not offer them enough they stick them right through their necks, or arms, or legs, or eyelids, or ears, or lips. Then you clap your hands together in horror and beg forgiveness, crying, "Take! Take! Take as much as you want!"

JNY - Do they not bleed?

BURO - No, there is no blood. For they are the Pivalawara (ones of the ~~beg~~ging bowl). They are an example of ilim for you.

A Munge once came to me and told me of a special place surrounded by trees to which they go. They must sleep the night there, and if they are scared they are finished. As they sleep Ishvar calls on them three times to rise, but they must not rise. Then His heart comes down and enters them, and the two hearts become one. That is how they get their special powers.

RAMSHI VARESA - Surely they must be afraid?

BURO - But if they are afraid they are finished. No! They must have no fear. [3/5/81]

Ilim also gives you control over the bodies of others.

RANO AKHIYANI - You (JNY) can read. You have four eyes where we have only two. We see only writing, but you see writing and understand its meaning. Ilim is that which is written. It is very powerful. It is a thing which can wither trees.

JNY - What do you mean?

RAMSHI VARESA - Ilim can do many things. In the early days, when there were no doctors with injections or pills, we had to rely solely on ilim for cures. If a man was bitten by a snake or a scorpion then an ilimwara (one of ilim) would be called in. He can suck the very poison from the bite. If he did not have ilim he would die, just as we ordinary people would die if we were to do such a thing. [4/5/81]

Ilim can also give control over the whole person.

BURO MAYANI - Charms are ilim written down and tied around your neck. If, for example, I wished to be your friend but you would have nothing to do with me, I would obtain a charm and tie it around my neck. Then, if you and I were to become close, it would be the ilim that was pulling you. [3/5/81]

#### IV. The Ilimwara

There are many different types of ilimwara, people with specialised knowledge in various fields, and we shall look at the main categories below. It is acknowledged, however, that anyone can become an ilimwara, provided that they have a means of access to ilim. Different fields of work require different ilim. It is possessed in varying degrees by many Kori villagers who have learned their particular skill from a teacher in the past.

Dasrath Shekhani was well known locally for his skill as a herbalist. His knowledge of herbal antidotes for common maladies was occasionally made use of by the villagers. He would prescribe poultices and medicinal mixtures for injuries or pain. He was never the last line of defence, however, and if his remedies were unsuccessful little damage was done to his reputation, for his cures were not regarded as foolproof.

Mama Sahadeva was another who possessed a knowledge of healing herbs. One particular bush was his favourite. It was said to give relief to pain, and he would seldom hesitate to go and search the fields for it if there was the need. During the time we were resident in Sirah he never once found it.

One herbal remedy for pain was known and spoken of by everyone. This was the much sought after momai.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Momai is the stone of the berry of a very old kerda tree. Muslims bring it back with them when they return from their pilgrimage (to Mecca). It is usually a Seyvid or a Pir who has it in his possession.

They say that if you have a broken bone or a bad pain and you eat momai then you will be cured immediately. The problem is that momai is so expensive. [16/1/81]

The topic arose once when the progress of Lakshman's son, Manoo, who had a broken arm, was being discussed.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - This potter seems to be asking you back an awful lot. I know of another bone-setter who only ties his bindings twice, each binding lasting for seven days.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - The best cure for any fracture is momai, but where is it to be found?

ARJAN - Ask your landlord. Ali should know.



OLD MAN (a relation) - He will not know. Very few Sindi know where to get it from.

LAKSHMAN - But those who go on pilgrimage bring it back. They know about it over there (in Arabia). That is where it is grown.

OLD MAN - What would those that go on pilgrimage know about momai? It is only we country people who have any real knowledge of these things. Townsfolk are ignorant. [29/8/81]

Whereas the person with the knowledge of herbs is turned to occasionally so as to increase the chance of a cure, the bone-setter is one whose skill, rather than knowledge, is widely sought after, providing the only cure for broken bones. There is no mystery in bone-setting, just as the skills of ploughing or of the potter are easily comprehended. The skills and experience are passed down from generation to generation among the castes who specialise in the techniques required.

Manoo had fallen from the uthak wall and broken his arm. His father was absent at the time so it was Mama Sahadeva and I who took him to Tande to the potter there who was a well known bone-setter.

The potter took out his splints and carved them to size while we sat and watched. Manoo, who was not too bright, seemed unaware of what was happening. Mama Sahadeva then held him still and I was instructed to grip a length of twisted cloth which was looped tight around the break - a single fracture of the fore-arm near the wrist. The potter then pulled the arm straight and I held it there while he deftly rubbed it with his fingers, smoothing the bone into place.

Manoo, by this time, was kicking and crying. Eventually he was bandaged and splinted, and at last I was able to let go, my fingers cramped with the continuous strain of pulling. I paid the potter twenty-five rupees and we were told to bring the boy back in two days time for a further examination. [24/8/81]

Let us return to maladies which cannot be cured in such a straightforward manner. Those fevers, for example, which are not cured by "heat" treatment.

ZAVO PAJI - You could ask for help from a Pir, or a Fakir, and promise them a reward in return. [3/6/82]

Pir and Fakir are Muslim holy men, men who lead devout lives and possess Muslim ilim. Just as a "Westerner" might approach a medical practitioner from any background, so a Kori might approach any ilimwara.

DADI ZATI - My shaking began before the death of my husband, although It was not so bad then. But there was a time when for three years I suffered from murgj. I had murgj inside me.

DADI ZATU - Murqi is when a person appears to be dead but is not.

DADI ZATI - I used to fall down, shaking all over. Sometimes I could see. Sometimes I could not see at all. If you were to hold a coin out in your hand then sometimes I would see one hand, sometimes I would see two.

DADI ZATU - You would have been cured if you had gone to a bhopa.

DADI ZATI - Bhopa! I was taken to many, and to no effect. I had burning dung cakes piled high around me. Sometimes the bhopa himself would lift them onto the top of his head. But the murqi would not leave. ...

Eventually I was taken in a cart by my hahara, Mothi's father (HyB), and my Zetani (HeBZ). They took me to a Muslim woman who lives out beyond Kokhar. She looks into the Koran to discover what her Caliph is saying to her - she worships a Caliph, you see.

I was brought into her house, and she looked into her Koran. She held it up in front of me, and when she did this I began to rock backwards and forwards. Then she said that my illness was too great for her powers. Nevertheless, she took me outside and beat me with her staff across the back a few times. She struck so hard that after a few strokes my backbone was showing and there was blood everywhere. When she stopped I lay so still that she thought she had killed me. Then she became very scared, and ordered my companions to take me away. I cannot remember any of this happening to me. Apparently I was laid in the cart, covered in blood and not breathing. They brought me home believing that I was dead.

There was a wedding at our village at that time, and as our cart arrived the children were shouting, "The zan (groom's party) is coming! The zan is coming!" That was the first thing that I can remember hearing. It was only then that my breath (hah) returned and I began to live again. [4/6/82]

We see here that it is not the knowledge itself which is unable to cure, but the amount of knowledge possessed, ilim being the source of power. Where the living are unsuccessful at curing, the dead are often turned to. The woman spoken of by Dadi Zatu conferred with her dead Caliph through the medium of her Koran. The graveyard close to Sirah in which the villagers are buried also contains the grave of a Pir, a Muslim holy man.

BURO MAYANI - He is called Mahbat Shah. He was a Seyvid who was close to Ishvar and great in ilim and good deeds. He lived in this area, and had followers whilst alive. Offerings are still made to him in return for which he heals sicknesses. If a man is of such truth then we will have faith in him. (i.e. despite him being a Muslim.) [19/10/81]

In the following incident we see Ratani (w/o Lavi Dungarani) making such an offering to the Pir's grave. Her main offering, however, was to the grave of her father, Rama Patel, and here we touch upon another source of ilim among the dead, one's ancestors.

We met Ratani at the village entrance. She was encouraging children to go to the graveyard. We asked why.

RATANI - I have just bought fifteen rupees worth of bhao and they are distributing it there.

We arrived at the graveyard to find her son, der (HyB), and Zamai (DH) accompanied by other boys from their hamlet. The girls hung back outside the circle of bushes waiting for their share. The boys had two bags of bhao sweets, and were in the process of lighting a dung cake fire in front of Rama's tomb.

PANSA DUNGARANI - One is for the Pir, and one is for the Patel.

JNY - Why are you making this offering?

PANSA - My bhabhi (eBW - Ratani) was ill. But now she is better and so is offering bhao. We are to burn an offering at both graves.

An incense holder was taken from inside the tomb, and incense was lit and placed in it. The coals of the fire were then placed upon the tomb's iron griddle and anointed with ghi. Onto this was crumbled the bhao sweets which were lit with a match. This process was repeated at the grave of the Pir. The boys then bowed to the offerings and the bhao was distributed and taken to the children waiting outside the graveyard. [6/8/81]

This was not an isolated incident.

JNY - When do people make offerings to graves?

DADI ZATI - It is only to the old Patel that offerings are made. In the early days people used to do this more. In this village it is only to the old Patel. You will see what happens at Divali. Rama's son, Radhu, will make a big offering. He used to cook everything at the graveyard, but now it will be cooked at his home. But, before anyone can eat, they take some to the grave and burn it there. [2/10/81]

It is significant that it was the direct descendants of Rama who were making the offerings. The practice of ancestor worship was more commonplace amongst at least one other Hindu caste.

DADI ZATI - Out beyond Zarkee there is a Vaniya graveyard. When the Vaniya were here (pre-partition) they would hold a big feast there every year. Wheat pudding, vermicelli, halva, and many sweet things were cooked and offered to their ancestors, and then fed to the guests. They were doing pirdi puzari

Among the Kori in general, however, no such enthusiasm for ancestor worship was evident. The permanent brick and cement tomb built in Rama's honour lent itself to the practices of his offspring, and was a strong contrast to the earthen grave mounds of other Kori which fast disappeared. Perhaps the situation is best summed up by Arjan Adi'hra.

JNY - Does everyone make offerings at the tomb of the old Patel?

ARJAN ADI'HRA - No! The tomb was simply built in his memory. His sons may offer to it, but no one else. [15/5/81]

This, then appears to be the limits of the ancestor worship recognised within Sirah. Freed and Freed note that in Shanti Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, the worship of ancestors had been

reduced to such times as a wedding, when a cow began to give milk, on the day of the dark fortnight in which the ancestor died, on days of fasting, and to supplicate the ancestors when there was sickness in the family (1980:52).

In contrast, the Kori might turn to ancestors only in the case of sickness. Rama Patel was a well respected man, and to his children, was seen as having the power to cure their ailments for which they gave an offering in return.

## V. The Jadhuwara

Among the living it is not only the knowledgeable and holy among their Muslim neighbours who are sought out by the Kori. Indeed the ilim for cures can usually be found much closer to home, there being very few villages who do not possess at least one person with a knowledge of some jadhu. In Sirah one such person was Mothi Akhiyani. He knew one or two cures.

Buro Mayani had hurt his eye whilst out hunting hare. We accompanied him to the house of Mothi where we watched him being treated. Mothi wrapped some cotton wool around a twist of rope, dipped it in oil, and set it alight. He then held it over a brass bowl of water, and Buro fixed his gaze upon the flaming droplets of oil as they dropped into the water.

Eventually, Mothi signalled that the treatment was at an end by dousing the flame in the water itself. Everyone said "Bass!" ("finish"), and Buro admitted that he felt much better. His hurt, he said, was soothed. [13/3/81]

NANI - When Mothi made that son for Buro's eye, he took rope wrapped in cotton and dipped in oil, and lit it. All that Buro then had to do was watch the flaming drops fall into the dish and he was cured. This son works very well if you are ever struck in the eye. In his heart Mothi was speaking jadhu while he held the burning rope. Without his jadhu the son would have not worked. [2/10/81]

What then are jadhu?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Jadhu are words of power. They are mixed up, and the ordinary listener would not understand them. [2/8/81]

Depending upon the ilim of their user, the power of jadhu can be very great indeed.

KASHU DARZI - Those who have ilim can bring down stars. If they possess the knowledge of the right jadhu they can achieve this. Often people of ilim have contests to see whose ilim is the strongest, and the one who can bring down a star is the winner. Once there was a Nawab whose power was contested by a Yogi. The Yogi brought down a star and the Nawab was thus defeated. [25/9/81]

Rano Akhiyani was another villager who had knowledge of some jadhu. He explained to me how this had come about.

RANO AKHIYANI - I used to be devoted to Hanuman, whose idol is at the village entrance. Every Monday I used to go without food. I would make an offering to Hanuman, bow down and worship him, then distribute the offering among the children. My love for him was so great that I would feel no hunger and would fast until evening.

Then a bhopa, who was a friend of mine, suggested that I use Hanuman's power with jadhu. So I learned jadhu, and by binding threads on people I was able to cure headaches, stomach-aches, fevers, and similar maladies. Eventually, however, I abandoned my worship, and, as I had left Hanuman, so Hanuman's power left me and my jadhu no longer worked. [5/8/81]

We see here that, although the power which worked the jadhu came from Hanuman, it was the bhopa who had engineered its harnessing for practical purposes (bhopa - god/goddess medium/ temple keeper). We can also see the variety of ailments which jadhu can cure. The binding on of



threads referred to is the physical act of binding a thread around the sufferer's arm, leg, finger, toe, or neck. The thread contains the power of the jadhu, the jadhu being chanted over it in a prescribed manner before it is applied. Through the thread the malady is driven out and its return is prevented.

Dasrath Shekhani, as well as being a recognised herbalist, also knew some jadhu. This knowledge he acquired from a book lent to him by a relative. I once visited him with the intention of examining this book but he confessed that he had returned it to its owner. He did, however, tell me about it.

DASRATH SHELKHANI - In it was written various ways of approaching dev (gods). ... It said that if you worshipped in certain ways you would receive certain fruit (rewards). Or, if you offered to a certain dev, he would give you such and such. It was that sort of book. I cannot read anyway.

JNY - Who, then, taught you your jadhu?

DASRATH - My teacher was Uko Bhopa, or Uko Ram. He taught me jadhu when I was a mere boy of fifteen or sixteen. Some jadhu were for when someone had been struck in the eye, some for illness in a young baby, some for headaches, some for fevers, and some for when the evil eye (see 4.4) had struck an animal and it had fallen ill or was giving little milk.

There were other jadhu which could be used against people with whom you were angry, to inflict them with troubles and cause them pain. But I have had nothing to do with such wicked, papi jadhu. I do, however, practice dharmi jadhu. I cannot teach these to you at this moment. I can only repeat them in my heart. If you come back at the time of Northa/Divali I could teach them to you. The No Northa and the Vih Divali (see 5.3), at that time I can speak them out loud. [6/5/82]

Dasrath here emphasises the secret nature of jadhu: words which can only be spoken out loud at a certain time of year, and only then can they be learned by the selo from the teacher. Knowledge, however, and the power of a supernatural patron/matron is not all that is required for jadhu to work successfully.

RANO AKHIYANI - The bhopa who taught me the jadhu also taught me thek. These were the various things which I had to do or avoid doing for the jadhu to work. One example was not to cross a line of ants. You had first to sweep the ants aside with your cloth so as to break their line. You also had to sit in a water channel once every year and repeat all the jadhu you knew seven times with your cupped palms holding water which you then poured over your head with each repetition. If all

these rules were not kept then the ilim of the jadhu would leave, although you might still remember the actual Jadhu.

JNY - Did you use to go to the graveyard to learn your jadhu?

RANO - Yes, I did.

JNY - What would happen?

RANO - Nothing happened. Sometimes I was afraid, sometimes I was not. When you leave the graveyard, however, you must not look right, left, or behind, whatever happens; whatever you hear or see or feel or how frightened you are. [3/8/81]

It is possible, then, for anyone to use jadhu, provided they are taught correctly and observe the necessary thek, and have the necessary connections with the supernatural. Dasrath has referred above to the Jadhu which is used to harm others, which he labelled "papi". Such jadhu is spoken of, although, not surprisingly it is nigh impossible to find anyone who admits to practising it.

JNY - Can jadhu be used to harm others?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Yes, anyone who knows the jadhu can use them against other people. If a man becomes ill, for example, and blood comes from his mouth and nose, and appears in his shit, then we know that this is no ordinary illness that a doctor can cure, but the work of a jadhuwara. We then have to call in a bhopa who will prescribe a cure. The bhopa cannot, however, tell us who the oppressor is. For, if he could, would we not beat that person up? [2/8/81]

It is only those who practice jadhu who can cure people from its effects.

RANO AKHIYANI - It is no use going to a doctor when you are suffering from jadhu. A doctor will only give injections, and what good will that do? For jadhu you must go to a bhopa. [16/5/81]

Actual illnesses or misfortunes caused by jadhu will be discussed more fully below (4.4). Let us, however, briefly look at a recognised expert in the use of jadhu: the bhopa.

JNY - How does one become a bhopa?

HADHU VEAN - If you wish to become a bhopa you must worship a mata (mother/goddess). You must make offerings to Her and be Her devotee. From her you will get your power and strength. If you do not worship her and make offerings to her you will lose her power. [11/8/81]

We have already seen how Rano's source of power was not a mata, but Hanuman, the Monkey God. On further investigation, however, Rano elaborated.

RANO AKHIYANI - All bhopa must follow Hanuman. Like a patel, Hanuman walks in front and all the gods follow after him. The bhopa must follow him as well as their dev. I used to follow Momai Mata, the dev of my zach (patrilineage), but my wife stopped cooking my offerings and so I was prevented from carrying out the necessary duties. (Rano's wife, Chali, had a forceful character and had been influenced by some of the Christians in the village.) [22/11/81]

Although the power of the bhopa comes from the dev he follows, his ability to make use of this power depends upon his knowledge of jadhu.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Jadhu are learned out in the jungle. There is a special day around about the time of Divali when bhopa and jadhuwara gather in graveyards and revise their jadhu so that they will last another year. The bhopa and his selo will sit in the graveyard and then the ghosts will come. The ghosts do not speak, however, and I do not know from where the jadhu originate for no new ones are learned from the ghosts. [2/8/81]

Where, then, do jadhu come from?

JNY - What is ilim?

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Ilim is where one learns what is written down. It takes a long time and is much hard work.

JNY - You yourself can read and write. Does this make you an ilimwara?

ARJAN - No, but if I were to study certain things I could become one.

Bhopa are ilimwara. On Kara Soudis, the day before Divali, the bhopa and their selo all gather in the graveyard. They spend all night there, sitting inside a circle - the "Circle of Hanuman" - which the bhopa marks out in the ground with a knife. They are safe inside this circle, and the ghosts and demons come to see them. The bhopa will have brought boiled grain with him to throw to the ghosts and demons, so as to feed them. During the night of Kara Soudis the selo revise all the ilim they know, refreshing their memories. [15/5/81]

Jadhuwara in general, and especially bhopa appear to be able to use their ilim, which takes the form of jadhu, to seek the help of the power which they worship, their acts of devotion themselves being defined by their ilim of what rites are necessary. As Arjan said, ilim is not just knowledge for the sake of knowledge, it is knowledge put into practice as

a means of access to power. If knowledge does not result in power then it is not ilim.

In Chapter 5 the relationship between bhopa and dev will be explored more fully. For the moment it is important to realise the central significance of the bhopa to the ongoing use of jadhu in Kori life.

## VI. The Doctor

A growing force to be reckoned with in the field of ilimwara is the doctor. To the Kori, the doctor is someone who has a knowledge of the effects of different foods on the body, of modern medicines, and of injections. Most of the larger villages in Sind have at least one such doctor, whose knowledge and skill have been learned under apprenticeship to another doctor. Larger towns boast several doctors with greater skills. If a villager has the time and the money, the visit to the doctor is an accepted step in gaining cure for an illness.

Huro Paji's son, Naru, had had a bad fever. Huro explained to Dadi Zati the action which he had taken.

HURO PAJI - First I took him to the bhopa, but to no effect. So then I took him to the doctor at Tande. Naru is a lot better now. [29/8/81]

The growing acceptance of the doctor has naturally affected the status of the other experts in the field of curing.

HADHU VEAN - Whereas before the people would take their illnesses to the bhopa, now they take them to the doctor. Doctors are very clever. [11/8/81]

It is important to mention, however, that the doctor of the Kori is not the direct equivalent of the doctor in the "West". The Kori doctor fits well into their notion of the ilimwara: one who gains special knowledge through his attachment to a teacher. The doctors themselves seldom have a knowledge of the premises which underlie western medicinal practice, but instead merely act out the ritual sequences taught them by their teacher, in the same way that bhopa work their healing with jadhu and charms. There is nothing remarkable in this, however, for the

importance of modern medicines, and of iadhu is that they work, not how they work, just as the wealthy villager will make full use of his cassette recorder without having to know the principles behind its operation.

Western medicine does not challenge Kori beliefs about healing, for its use is adjusted to fit in with these beliefs. Nichter sums up this process most adequately.

Just as a new deity does not cause the villager to lose faith in his existing pantheon or the structural principles upon which it is ordered, so the appearance of a new medicine or medical paradigm does not result in loss of faith in old practices or etiologies (1977:437).

In the process, however, it may undergo some distortion, as can be seen in the examples that follow.

Arjan's newborn son, Viram, was taken by him to the hospital in Hyderabad as his right eye duct was blocked. The doctor there prescribed the following exercise: eleven strokes of the finger across the eyelid twice a day. To the worried Dadi Zati this was a son and she was visibly reassured. The strokes were a ritual to be carried out, being seen as of practical value, but with "practical" implying more than it perhaps would to a westerner.

On another occasion I was visiting Huzo Akhiyani when Pansa Zandariya dropped in. Huzo had just had his chest x-rayed, and, as Pansa had only recently had his stomach x-rayed, he was drawn into the discussion with Lakshman Bhagat, Jari, and Ramzi joining in.

Talk centred upon what should and should not be eaten. Pansa's stomach ulcer had benefitted greatly from his stringent observance of certain dietary restrictions, and so he advised Huzo to observe them also. The medicines both had been prescribed by their doctors were relegated to a level of secondary importance. What was most important was the doctors' diagnosis, the foods which had caused the illness, and those which had to be eaten or avoided to ensure recovery. Huzo had been advised by the doctor at the clinic to eat ghi, milk with sugar, meat, and other "strength giving" foods. Those present, however, saw ghi as being suspect, for was it not bad for a cough?

When the medicines of the doctor are accorded status, it is if they are to be ingested through a drip or an injection. Injections are demanded for the cure of the least of maladies, even if, in western terms, they are going to have no effect.

Hospitals are generally seen in terms of their out-patient clinics. Few Kori would willingly admit themselves to one, for their reputation as places where people die discourages this. This creates a cycle in itself, whereby



only those who are at death's door are taken, as a last resort, to hospitals. Even this is the exception, however, as Kori prefer to die at home.

A doctor with a good reputation has built it up on the basis of his ability to isolate the foods which have caused an illness and those which must therefore be avoided for its cure, and his ability to dispense injections, to charge reasonably forbidding fees, and to cure common illnesses such as malaria and diarrhoea.

In one area, however, the doctor's ilim is insufficient. This is where an illness has been caused through the use of jadhu. It is therefore possible for the doctor to explain any failure as being due to the use of jadhu, and for the jadhuwara to have a field where his knowledge rules supreme.

## VII. Summary

As a preliminary to the rest of the chapter we have briefly looked at the major ilimwara upon whom the Kori rely in their struggle with illness and misfortune in their day to day living. We have seen that knowledge for curing simple maladies may be widespread, but that it becomes secret and specialised for more complex ones. Ilimwara may be those who have some knowledge of some jadhu, or they may be experts in a particular field. Ilim can be in the realm of herbs, foods, medicines, and jadhu, and can be used to gain help from the living or the dead.

Where it exists, ilim is conceived of as being accessible only through the teacher-pupil relationship. Its very nature thus lends itself to the secrecy which often surrounds it. One ilimwara noticeably absent from the field of curing is the bhagat.

JNY - Are bhopa distinct from bhagat?

RANO AKHIYANI - Of course they are. Bhagat worship Ishvar, and are concerned only with the correct path by which to follow Him. Bhopa are concerned with both good and evil, and they follow themselves. Bhopa charge for their services, for example, five rupees for a fever or a stomach-ache, or a goat or chicken for their sacrifice. Poor people suffer in their hands. Would you ever see a bhagat behaving like that? [5/8/81]

Whereas the bhopa offers relief in the present, the bhagat offers hope for the future. We have seen, nevertheless, that though their functions may be different their patterns of worship and of discipleship are structured in very similar ways.

As we go on to explore the different causes of illness and misfortune in the sections that follow, we will be progressing along a continuum. At the one end we will be looking at those conditions over which the Kori has the most control, at the other those over which there is the least control, because of the lack of special knowledge, skill, and power. At the latter end, the ilimwara come into their own. At the former, we encounter notions about the nature of different foods, and how they can be balanced against each other.

## SECTION 4.2: DIET

In examining how the Kori cope with the present, "balance" is a notion which is seldom far from the ideas that are voiced. Its most straightforward application can be found in the perceived relationship between food and how the body reacts to it. This relationship allows the cause of an illness to be traced directly to the actions of the individual concerned, and at the same time brings a remedy within his or her grasp. If, by eating something, a Kori becomes ill, then it is possible, by eating something with the opposite properties, for that person to become well again.

### I. The Hot and the Cold

In the previous section when Huzo's chest complaint was discussed, we saw how the gathering paid more attention to the foods the doctor had forbidden than to the medicines prescribed. It was hoped that by eating the right foods Huzo would recover. On one occasion Bapu Agisani spoke of a man who had been diagnosed as having T.B. At the time of diagnosis this man was merely engaged to be married, yet the marriage had gone

ahead and the man's grandson had recently been born and he himself was still alive and healthy. Ramshi, who was present, remarked that this was because the man had avoided eating kiri foods. Bapu explained to me the sort of foods which were kiri - bitter foods such as chillies.

But I was to find out later that foods which in some instances are kiri in other instances are not.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Kiri things are those things which the doctor tells you not to eat; the things he forbids. For example, Nena (who had a fever) was told today not to eat spinach, tomatoes, or rice.

JNY - Are these "hot" or are they "cold"?

ARJAN - It does not matter. Some are, some are not. Those who are healthy can eat whatever they wish. There are no kiri things for them. [21/12/81]

Throughout the Indian sub-continent foods are classified as being "hot" or "cold". It became plain upon further investigation among the Kori that whether foods were classified thus had a bearing upon whether they were declared to be kiri for different illnesses. Nevertheless, such classification was by no means consistent from one Kori to another. In February 1982, having compiled an exhaustive list of all possible foods and drinks consumed by the Kori villagers, I approached three separate groups and asked them to classify the list (see Appendix I).

The list in Appendix I points to several conclusions. Heat is not directly related to pepperiness, as can be seen from the classification of green and red chilli as cold. Nor is heat directly related to strength, for many "strong" foods are also cold. One of the most significant points made by compiling such a list is that classification is inconsistent from Kori to Kori. Of the seventy-two foodstuffs listed, all three parties are in agreement only thirty two times. Categorisation of foods on many occasions appears to be arbitrary, depending upon the direct experiences of those asked.

JNY - How can you tell whether a food is hot or cold?

HADHU VEAN - You can tell when you eat it of course. Cold foods are restful for the body. Hot things make an impact. [13/8/82]

Upon investigation, the criteria used for evaluation also appear arbitrary. We have seen, for example, how Nani claimed that sweet potatoes were cold because they grew underground, whereas moments before she had classified potatoes as being hot. There were other criteria voiced also.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Hot things grow in the hot season, and cold things in the cold. (But potatoes grow in the cold season - JNY.)

MAMA SAHADEVA - Hot things make you sweat a lot. (But chillies cause a great deal of perspiration - JNY.)

NANI - You become ill from eating certain foods at the wrong time of year. Hot foods are good in the cold season, and cold foods in the hot season. [13/2/82]

This last line of reasoning comes the closest to explaining the criteria whereby foods are classified as being kiri for certain illnesses. There is no doubt that the season, the nature of the illness, and the temperature of the body are the factors perceived to be most important in the classification of foods in terms of health. Precise details of the classificatory system, however, are generally entrusted to the ilimwara, and increasingly this ilimwara is the doctor.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - We don't really know why foods are hot and cold. But when we are ill the doctor tells us. [13/2/82]

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - It is only really important to know which foods are hot and cold when you are ill. Otherwise there are times when you have to watch how much of a certain food you eat, for you know you will suffer from it. [22/2/82]

Certain foods, such as mangoes, honey, and rum, are recognised as being dangerous if eaten in large quantities; the eater running the risk of rash or nausea. By and large, however, foods tend to be classified after the event, i.e. when illness has appeared. They are then either forbidden or recommended so as to restore the bodily balance.

That foods are hot and cold is acknowledged by the Kori as unquestionable. Which foods are hot, and which are cold, however, is a matter for the specialists. The main thing is that, because foods are hot and cold it is possible, through their manipulation, to have some control over one's bodily condition in the event of illness appearing.

## II. The Pure and the Impure

The classification of foods is more complex, however. Hot/cold categorisation is part of a much wider field of classification. There are conditions which arise from eating certain foods which are less tangible to the "western" eye than simple illnesses, yet equally important. For example there is impurity, something which separates the Kori from those whom they designate as low caste. To a large extent this separation is based upon commensal traditions, and this will be examined more fully in Chapter 7 below. The following conversation about animals illustrates the complexity of the topic, however.

Conversation had focussed on the fact that in the Thar Desert there were no oxen available and so donkeys were used to thresh wheat. The question then arose of how the donkeys can urinate without polluting the wheat grain. I asked why donkeys' urine was impure.

NILO KOTWAR - It does not matter if a donkey urinates whilst in a field, but if it does so whilst threshing wheat then the grain is ruined.

JNY - Does not the urine of an ox ruin the grain?

NILO - No. The urine of the ox is pure and does no harm. This is because the ox eats only grass and such like. The donkey, in comparison, eats shit. And so its urine is bad.

JNY - What about horses?

NILO - The urine of the horse is also bad, as is that of the camel.

JNY - Do horses eat shit?

NILO - No, but their urine is bad anyway.

JNY - Is the urine of the camel bad?

LAKSHMAN - When does the camel ever thresh wheat? Its feet are the wrong shape and too soft. But yes, its urine is bad.

JNY - What about goats?

NILO - The urine of the male kid is pure. But once it grows up it becomes impure. And if you eat the flesh of a billy-goat it tastes strange. (Kori butcher their goats young.)

MAMA SAHADEVA - That is because the billy drinks the urine of the female goats. [17/11/81]

It would appear that the purity of what an animal consumes is directly related to its status and function in Kori society, much in the same way



that castes can be classified as high or low depending upon their diet.

Another condition effected by eating habits is that of one's relative pap or dharam. The bhagat abstains from eating meat and thereby avoids the pap of the animal's death. Not so the meat-eater, whose pap increase with each killing in which s/he is implicated (see Ch 2).

In contrast to the bhagat, the bhopa may sacrifice animals in offering to their dev, thereby assuring their support in the present; the future being less relevant to day to day well-being. Yet the support of the dev is often dependent upon certain commensal rules being observed.

RANO AKHIYANI - The Adi'hra (zach) do not eat chicken. This is the rule of their mata (mother/goddess). If they eat chicken, or drive a chicken from their house, then the mata will allow misfortune to befall that household. [19/11/81]

### III. The Weak and the Strong

The hot/cold dichotomy is used in the context of illness, where imbalance is diagnosed and foods prescribed to negate it. Another dichotomy, however, apparent in our list of foods, is that of weak/strong. Where the weak/strong dichotomy is used we find that the notion of balance serves no useful purpose. Whereas hot or cold foods are diagnosed in retrospect so as to negate a bodily imbalance, strong foods are classified in advance, and consumed so as to create a bodily condition - that of bodily strength. But, as we shall see, bodily strength is not a condition relating merely to the size of a Kori's muscles.

As was done with the foods listed in Appendix I, a list of edible animals was read to groups of Kori so as to ascertain their relative heat or coolness. A variety of replies were given, some saying that the sheep was the hottest animal, others the chicken, still others the river salmon. There was no general consensus, however. But when asked about the strengths of the various meats, ideas were more clear-cut. Bozo Akhiyani, for example.

BOZO AKHIYANI - (In order of strength)

#### 1. Beef/Buffalo

2. Humans
3. Wild Boar
4. Sheep
5. Goat
6. Hare
7. Chicken
8. Fish
9. Wild Duck

It is to do with size. If you were to eat me, then you would gain more strength than if you were to eat a small boy who is weak. If you eat an ox, then you will gain its strength which is great indeed. Can the ox not pull the plough? [13/2/82]

Such ideas were widely accepted.

RAMSHI VARESA - A cannibal is a man just like you or me. You cannot tell it apart. But it cannot eat bread or vegetables. It can only eat human flesh, or animal flesh. Human flesh gives it great strength and it can carry off little children, or even a man who is asleep. [28/7/81]

Zakal once explained to me why it was that the Kori feared the Pathan, the tribesmen from the Northwest.

ZAKAL (w/o L.Adi'hra) - The Pathan eat people, you know. They steal boys or girls and take them away and eat them. Or other people often kidnap children and take them to the Pathan who buy them and eat them.

JNY - Does that mean that they get their strength from eating humans?

KARAMSHI AKHIYANI (s/o Bharat) - Yes, that is where they get their strength. If you were to eat human flesh, you would also get the strength of a Pathan. [10/8/81]

Meat is not the only food which is a source of strength.

BHOPI ZATI - Do you enthrone Ganesh at weddings in your country?

JNY - No. Ganesh is enthroned by those who follow the Hindu Dharam. We follow a different dharam.

BURO MAYANI - But, you know, if you were to enthrone Ganesh, and eat all the sweet things that we feed the groom in the days leading up to the wedding, then you would have enough strength to marry two, four, five brides! [19/10/81]

This statement was met with much back-slapping and amusement, and made obvious allusions to the sexual prowess arising from eating such strength-giving foods. Sweetness is clearly associated with sexuality. This is emphasised in the following incident, described by Mama Sahadeva.

MAMA SAHADEVA - You should have been at the fair on its third day. There was a woman there, with a child in her arms, and up came a Sindi and struck her in the gadi.

JNY - What is the gadi?

MAMA SAHADEVA - It is when you do this to a woman. (He demonstrated by making the gesture of thrusting his finger up between his legs.) She managed to hit him once, but there was a great crush because of the crowd, and he managed to bend low and run away. Everybody laughed and shouted, "Aha! Struck in the gadi! Struck in the gadi!"

JNY - Who were they laughing at, the Sindi or the woman?

MAMA SAHADEVA - At the woman of course. The Sindi got well away, and the stallkeepers cried out to her, "Come and have some sweets! They are sweet, you know, very sweet." [18/9/81]

One's strength, and therefore one's sexual prowess, is not just a matter of pride. Its relevance is manifest in a more material form.

JNY - What determines whether the child that is conceived is either a boy or a girl?

NANI - That is the will of Ishvar. If there is a boy in the father's bhag (orchard/fate) then a boy will be conceived. (She pointed to her head.) If not, then it will not be a boy.

This answer was fairly typical of Kori resignation to fate. Yet, on further probing, it was found that humans do have some say in the matter.

JNY - But is it not a matter of strength?

NANI - Yes, strength matters. If the father is strong then it will be a boy, and if the mother is strong then it will be a boy. But, if they are both weak then it will be a girl.

JNY - Can their strengths be increased by eating certain foods?

NANI - Yes. Ghi and milk are strength-giving foods, and so is meat. Meat is much more so than ghi even. If one eats these, one will be strong.

Despite such bold claims, Nani nevertheless felt that mere physical attributes would not on their own produce sons.

NANI - Also, if the woman leads a good life she will give birth to a son. If she is a bad woman then it will be difficult for her to have one. [16/5/82]

Once more, then, we are lead back to the conclusion that the sex of the child is the will of Ishvar.

DADI ZATI - When a girl is born we are annoyed. We say, "What good is a girl? But this is the will of Ishvar." [10/5/81]

It would appear that, for a boy to be conceived, in addition to having good relations with Ishvar, who has a final say in the matter, strength is a necessary attribute of the parents. Ishvar makes the decision, but strength makes such a decision possible. Strength, here, is a matter of degree rather than kind. To conceive a girl requires less strength than to conceive a boy. The strength of both the father and the mother goes into the formation of the child.

BURO MAYANI - The man's strength mixes with the blood of the woman and a ball forms, with Ishvar's will, from which the child grows. But it grows from the blood of the woman. That is why women are weak compared to men. It is from their blood, their flesh, and their skin that the child is formed. [1/9/81]

Ethnographers from the length and breadth of the Indian Sub-continent have discussed notions associating food, strength, and conception. In Sri Lanka, McGilvray (1982b:30) finds that semen, which is stored in the head, is seen to come from blood. This is echoed by Pocock's Gujarati ethnography (1973:170), and he adds that it can be reconverted from its stored form into intellectual or spiritual energy, while, in Rajasthan, Carstairs (1955:124) finds semen to be a measure of a man's moral and religious state. In Bengal Inden and Nicholas (1977:52) note that foods such as ghi, yoghurt, milk, and sugar are classified as seminal and are eaten by pregnant women to ensure that a male child is born. Translated into Kori terms, strong can be equated with those that produce semen.

That a great deal of the mother's strength is believed to be taken from her by the child she gives birth to is illustrated by the luxury foods she is given to eat after the birth.

JNY - Does a pregnant woman have to avoid certain foods?

ARJAN ADI'HRA - No, she can eat what she wants to beforehand. But for the first three days after the birth she must not eat buttermilk and other such things. She should eat lots of ghi, and meat if she can, for these are strength-giving foods. [21/12/81]

The child is not allowed to drink its mother's milk until the third day. We can assume, therefore, that the mother eats strength-giving foods in preparation for this, for milk itself is seen as very strength-giving.

JARI - There are thirty-two ingredients in the ladua, which are sweet meats made from coconut, almonds, and such things (with a base of wheat flour and ghi). When a woman gives birth to a boy then a whole big cooking pot of ladua is made. This is for

the mother to eat. When Huzo has a son we make them ourselves, and we use at least five sers of ghi. [22/2/82]

We have seen that both hot (e.g. meat, milk) and cold (e.g. ghi, white sugar) foods can be strength-giving. If we look at certain wedding traditions, however, we notice an interesting opposition. At the zanotoro, which is held by the groom's household for the groom's party on the night before the wedding, the traditional menu is rum, followed by meat. Both these foods are strong, but also extremely hot. In contrast, the foods served at the bride's village on the night of the wedding are strong, but also relatively cold, having to include at least a token amount of food cooked in ghi and white sugar. Karam Mayani explained this tradition to me.

KARAM MAYANI - At the wedding at least some sweet food must be provided, and if you can only afford a little then that much will be accepted. Having done this then you can feed the guests whatever else you can. It is a matter of shanti (peace), you see.

At the Zanotoro, however, it is a matter of kushi (joy), and so meat is provided. [25/2/82]

We see here that the hot/cold dichotomy does meet with the strong/weak one, but in a different realm. One can gain strength from both hot and cold foods, but, whereas hot foods tend to be for occasions of active pleasure, cold foods are for occasions of passive contentment. Cold foods tend to be those which have been refined or purified (e.g. white sugar, ghi - clarified butter), while hot foods are in a more raw state (e.g. meat, milk, raw sugar, nuts). Whereas strength is necessary for the conception of a child, there is good strength derived from cold foods, which are associated with dharam, and bad strength derived from meat, which is associated with pap. (In Kangra, Parry - 1979:89 - notes that hot foods are to cold as the Kshatriya is to the Brahman: i.e. cold is associated with spirituality. In Benares, Kaushik - 1976:284 - finds that, while the ancestors accept hot foods, the gods accept only cold.) Bearing in mind that the will of Ishvar is a necessary component in the formula for having a son, this may influence the foods eaten for this purpose. I would posit, however, that this may be so only to a small extent, and that only on ritual occasions such as the wedding and the zanotoro does such a combination of oppositions find expression.

We have looked at foods which are considered to be strength-giving. There are also certain substances which, if consumed, are deemed to have



the opposite effect upon one's physique and virility. On one occasion, for example, we had been discussing the inability of Buro's wife to bear children.

DADI ZATU - Buro has no strength. That is his problem. (She pointed to her head.) It is because he is a mowali.

All that cannabis he smokes! It is the same with Bozo. He also has no strength. [4/3/82]

Both Buro Mayani and Bozo Akhiyani, as well as happening to be childless, enjoyed smoking cannabis, and Buro enjoyed it most of all. The term mowali is used to refer to those who are in the habit of indulging in intoxicants, the latter being known as nasha. A mowali may habitually consume cannabis, opium, rum, or indeed all three. Mowali are also reputed to enjoy their tea very sweet, and to over-indulge themselves in other such luxuries which the sensible householder would not waste money upon, such as phang - the drink made from the leaves of the cannabis plant, sweetmeats, betelnut, sherbert, etc.

Mowali can, however, be usually divided into those who indulge in "hot" nasha (e.g. rum), and those who indulge in "cold" nasha (e.g. cannabis, opium). We notice that the "cold" nasha are the ones reputed to decrease virility.

Opium was not as widely used as cannabis and Buro Mayani was a central figure in a companionship of cannabis smokers which drew membership from Sirah as well as from his own village. Cannabis mowali are an accepted part of Kori social life. Their needs are provided for by the hosts of Bhao and other such social functions, and only rarely is their reputation ever used against them.

The intoxicated condition induced by the cold nasha is seen by some to be a way of achieving access to Ishvar, as the following shalok shows. It was a favourite of Buro Mayani.

Heavenly King  
Come! For I inhale (the pipe)  
Guide the ship of my soul  
To the other side

There is a great sense of comradeship between cannabis mowali, who greet each other fondly at social occasions and gather together in a group to smoke and exchange news.

To drink (i.e. smoke) is to live  
Don't give away to anyone how your heart feels  
If you do, then give it away to someone with a like  
heart  
Otherwise don't give it away to anyone

It is acknowledged, nevertheless, that the mowalis' main bond is with the pleasures of life.

Eat and drink  
In the name of Ali Shaki\*  
If you are asked to work then sleep deeply  
If you are asked to eat then eat fully  
(\* - different names can be substituted also)

#### IV. Summary

Following from our examination of the steps taken to combat illness through the idiom of balance and using hot and cold foods, we have gone on to examine foods which are not used to restore a balance but to create a certain bodily condition. The dichotomy arising in the latter case can be illustrated as follows.

Strong Foods - Weak Foods  
Virility - Sterility  
Earthly Goals - Heavenly Goals

The hot/cold dichotomy was also seen to have a bearing upon the above oppositions, and the following relationships have also emerged.

Hot Foods - Cold Foods  
 Active - Passive  
 Pleasure (Zanotoro) - Peace (wedding)  
 Raw Strength - Purified Strength  
pap - dharam

These two dichotomies can be combined using examples of typical foodstuffs in the following table.

HOT - COLD	
STRONG	Meat, Milk, Raw Sugar, Honey - <u>Ghi</u> , Refined Sugar
WEAK	Rum - Cannabis

What we see here are not distinct categories of foodstuffs, but rather continuums, the extremes of which are typified in the table above.

The Kori does have some degree of control over his/her bodily condition through the use of food. But control is not absolute. Indeed, even without taking into account the supremacy of Ishvar in the matter, we shall see that there are many bodily conditions over which control cannot be exerted in this manner. Diet is a simple way to control simple bodily conditions, but the Kori world is a complex one.

#### SECTION 4.3: MISFORTUNE AND ANIMALS

The Kori maintain a symbiotic relationship with many domestic animals, which are classified according to their lifestyle and usefulness. Certain animals, however, are seen to bring misfortune, being ill-omens. Others bring misfortune through their direct physical acts. We will look at animals following on from our study of foods because, whereas the Kori have a great deal of control over what they themselves eat, their control over the actions of animals is much less, for animals have a will of their own. The threat from an animal, nevertheless, is easily rendered tangible, and tangible remedies are therefore available. As we will be seeing in the sections following, there are many other threats to the Kori's well-being

which are far less physically tangible, and thus much more difficult to control or to remedy.

### I. Ill-omens

Certain animals threaten a Kori's well-being from a remote position. On one occasion I was going with Pansa Akhiyani to Tande by motorcycle when a mongoose crossed the track in front of us.

PANSA AKHIYANI - If a mongoose crosses your path when you are going somewhere then it means that your prospects are not too good for whatever undertaking you are upon. [26/11/81]

Other animals are also seen to be signs of ill fortune.

KANU DRIVER - When you hear the owls go "Krr! Krr!" at night, it means that something evil is going to happen in the village. The owl has a big head, big eyes, and two ears. It is an omen of bad fortune, and is evil. [6/2 /82]

The relationship between the owl and the Kori is, however, less remote than that of the mongoose, with regard to misfortune. The following conversation occurred one winter night around Arjan Adi'hra's household fire.

DADI ZATI - Listen to the owl calling. "Gu! Gu!", it cries. Beware tonight, all those with babies!

JNY - Why do they need to beware?

DADI ZATI - When a baby is newborn, and for the first six months of its life, it is in danger. Its mother must be wary if it cries in the night. For if she speaks and her words are uttered simultaneously with the cry of an owl, then that owl will take the life of her child. The child will become like an owl, with big eyes and a dried up body, and will eventually die, just as Netha's daughter died (see 6.4).

Netha, who was present, nodded her sad agreement to Dadi's words.

DADI ZATU - What people do is this. They catch and kill an owl, and bury it. It is left until only its bones remain, and these are dug up. Bits of bone are then tied around the neck of the child to protect it.

DADI ZATI - The strongest protection is from this bone (she pointed to her throat). [12/12/81]

## II. Rabies

There are animals which pose a more visible threat to the Kori. Although they have no fear of their own dogs, the dogs of another village are treated with reverence, for the dog bite, in addition to the immediate discomfort it brings and the likelihood of infection, carries with it the latent fear of rabies.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - No bhopa or jadhuwara can cure rabies. There used to be no cure at all, except when, sometimes, certain Sevyid could extract it - Sevyid are a zach of Muslims who claim to be the descendants of a certain holy man, maybe a Caliph. If you can find a proper Sevyid, and there are many who claim to be such, he may have the knowledge to help you. Only certain proper Sevyid have this knowledge.

About three years ago, Rano (Akhiyani) was bitten by a dog. It was not a bad bite, but he was worried about it, and so I went with him to Batai's tomb at Bitt Shah (Batai - see 3.2). A Sevyid lives there, and he cured him. He made Rano lie down upon his stomach, and then he placed his foot upon Rano's back and stepped over him. He did this, backwards and forwards, seven times. Then he took some ashes from his temple fire, and some temple water, mixed them together, and put them in a bottle. He sent us away with this, instructing Rano to drink from it. The rabies was removed, and Rano is alive today. [27/8/81]

Rabies continues to be a source of great anxiety among the Kori. It used to be that, if a human or an animal showed symptoms of rabies, the only remedy was to chain them to a tree and keep well away. Although hospitals do stock antidotes, patients tend to be brought in only when symptoms have appeared, by which time it is too late for a cure.

## III. Scorpions

A concept which arises from Lakshman's description of rabies is its personification. Rabies had to be "driven out" from Rano's body. We have already seen how pain itself is regarded as an entity in its own right. This theme is echoed in the way the poison of the scorpion is conceptualised.

In the middle of our afternoon meal, which we were snatching between heavy bouts of rain, Shamu (Dooda'hra) was stung by a large green scorpion. In my inexperience, although I quickly strapped up his foot, I did nothing to extract the poison and he was soon overcome with pain and helpless. The neighbours sent for Dasrath (Shakhani).



Dasrath ordered that Shamu be brought from his house into the open, for by then the rain had ceased. Shamu was brought out and laid on a bed. The strapping was undone on Dasrath's instructions, allowing the poison to run free in his body. Willing bystanders were then told to rub his arms and legs vigorously. This, Dasrath explained, was to sweep out the scorpion.

By this time Shamu was writhing in agony. He had to be held down forcibly, and someone sat on his chest to stop him falling off the bed. He had three great convulsive fits, by the end of which he was foaming from the mouth and had lost control of his bladder - an occurrence which was never to be forgotten. Then it passed, and he sat up and had a cigarette. The pain had greatly diminished, and, although subdued, he said he felt a lot better. Arjan offered Dasrath money, but Dasrath proudly refused.

Earlier, upon hearing of Shamu's misfortune, Buro Mayani had run to the house of Satruga Bhagat and asked for "ilimi water". Satruga obliged him by dutifully chanting some verses of scripture over a glass of water. This was then brought back for Shamu to drink. Shamu, being a Christian, resolutely refused to drink it. [30/6/77]

The jadhuwara, which in the above instance was Dasrath, drives out the scorpion not just by the sweeping/rubbing actions, but by using his Jadhu which, we have seen, is a formula chanted in his mind while the cure is going on. Rano was also reputed to have knowledge of scorpion jadhu, and so I questioned him on the matter.

RANO AKHIYANI - When someone is bitten by a scorpion, then the poison has to be drawn out with ilim.

JNY - Is it the scorpion that is drawn out?

RANO - Yes.

JNY - Then why does nothing emerge? And is the scorpion still not on the outside in the first place?

RANO - (After some thought.) No, when the scorpion bites you it is like a doctor giving you an injection. The poison enters into you and runs about inside. If you were bitten on the foot, then the poison would run up your leg. The poison is what causes the pain. If the scorpion itself is killed, then the pain is easily cured. But, if not, then, as the scorpion runs, so the pain runs inside your body. Thus the pain is spread wider.

To be cured you must go to a man who knows the correct jadhu. Without jadhu the scorpion will not come out.

JNY - But the scorpion does not come out, nor does the poison.

RANO - Yes, but the poison is finished.

Rano knew several jadhu which a man from Seyyidpur had taught him. He recited a couple to me and I taped them. One was in Sindhi, the other in Kachchi. They were in couplet form, but unintelligible to me, apart from one or two words such as "black scorpion", and "red scorpion".

He recited them at great speed and in a low voice.

RANO - I used to practice the curing of scorpion bites, but not anymore.

JNY - Do many people know these jadhu?

RANO - Many know them. They are not written down, but are learned from a teacher. [6/5/81]

Although, when I pressed him on the matter, Rano differentiated between the scorpion itself and its poison, the fact that the two are seen to be linked together is born out in the action taken against the former. With the scorpion remaining alive, the poison also remains free to course throughout the body. The scorpion is not, therefore, killed in petty revenge, but in an attempt to control the effects of its poison.

This notion has its parallels in other forms of mishap. On the occasion when Lakshman Adi'hra's son, Manoo, fell and broke his arm, his elder brother, Buro, was suspected of having pushed him. Zakal, their mother, raised the cry and, lifting Manoo in her arms, she set out in pursuit of Buro. The other villagers who were present joined in the chase, eager to inflict upon him a sound beating, and thus be freed from any association with Manoo's misfortune. Only the intervention of CSLY, who had observed the whole incident and testified to Buro's innocence, caused the chase to be called off. A terrified Buro was able to return to his house while arrangements were made for Manoo to be taken to the bone-setter.

There are occasions when there are no Jadhuwara available to drive out the scorpion's pain. In such cases the Kori have to fall back upon whatever knowledge of remedy they possess. Mama Sahadeva, in his own independent way, seemed to be adept in coping with such a situation.

MAMA SAHADEVA - I was once bitten by a scorpion, a black scorpion. It bit me on the big toe of my left foot. I thought it was an ant at first, until I looked and saw it nearby. So I killed it, and straightaway I buried my leg up to the shin in the ground. After five minutes the pain left.

JNY - Was the ground warm?

MAMA SAHADEVA - No, I was under a devari bush, and there were lots of ants about. I dug a hole with my shovel and shovelled them out of the way. Then I buried my leg. [15/11/80]

#### IV. Snakes

The bite of the snake is seen in the same terms as that of the scorpion, although it is taken more seriously. Snake and scorpion jadhu tend to be spoken of synonymously. (Solanki - 1976:230 - describes similar cures for snakebite in Southern Gujarat.) As with the scorpion, it is better to kill a snake that has bitten you. Nevertheless, greater ilim is needed to cure the bite of a snake.

JNY - If a snake is killed, does this make it more easy to cure its victim?

MAMA SAHADEVA - A bit. The cure really depends upon the jadhuwara. Some who have a great deal of ilim can contain the poison in the finger, some in the hand.

DADI ZATI - When Bhima's hara (WyZ) was bitten by a krite, they took him off to the Bhangi (sweeper caste) in Hyderabad. The Bhangi have great ilim. What they do is this. They make a fire of cow or buffalo dung and place on it a griddle filled with oil. When it is very hot, as hot as ghi is when we make pancakes, and bubbling, they plunge their hands into it and rub it all over their head and body, bathing in it. Then they suck out the poison from points in the victim's body. (She demonstrated by pretending to suck my knee.)

There are not just one Bhangi, but several. First the bhopa sucks, then another Bhangi, then a third, then a fourth. They always suck first from the head of the victim, for it is there, in the brain, that the poison has the most dangerous effect.

JNY - Do they not burn themselves in the oil?

BOTH - No! No! Why then would they do it? Their ilim is great, and it protects them. [26/8/81]

V. Summary We can see how misfortune which is attributed to the act of a animal can be remedied by recourse to a variety of formulae. The glass of water over which Satruga Bhagat had spoken words from scripture is a good example of "raw" ilim in action. The power of the ilimwara can be found in Rano's cure for rabies. Despite the fact that the Seyvid approached was a Muslim, he shared the same perceived reality. Where stronger remedies are necessary, the specialised ilim of the jadhuwara is required, where a specific cure is contained within the ilim itself, and released through the rite of the practitioner. Where none of these forms of ilim are available, however, we find more "practical" remedies of the sort utilised by Mama Sahadeva. Where there is no success then it is

obviously because Ishvar has not willed it so.

One point which is of significance is the lack of involvement of the bhagat. Other than the marginal role played by Satruga, when he empowered the glass of water for Shamu, I have no record of a bhagat's involvement in curing these, or any other day to day illnesses and misfortunes. In contrast, the jadhuwara are constantly sought after, especially the bhopa, who have powerful dev to back them, and reputations to match. Even more significant is the status given to the low caste Bhangi, who are attributed to be powerful jadhuwara. There exists, therefore, a parallel between the bhagat/bhopa dichotomy, and the high/low caste dichotomy, which can be stated as follows.

FUTURE CONCERN - PRESENT CONCERN

Bhagat - Bhopa

Ishvar - Dev

High - Low

Pure - Impure

Future Power - Present Power

#### SECTION 4.4: MISFORTUNE AND ENMITY

So far we have been looking at causal explanations of misfortune or illness which have been directly and simply related to their remedy. In this section, however, by examining misfortunes which are seen to be brought about by conscious or unconscious acts of ill-will, we enter what at first may appear to be a more complicated realm of causality.

##### I. The Curse

We will begin with acts of ill-will which are consciously perpetrated, and from a source external to the individual victim. Ill-will expressed directly, in the form of a curse for example, can be directly related to subsequent misfortune.

DADI ZATU - Over in the village of Sona Paji, a man once ran off with his wife, and took another woman with him also. But the wife ran back, and told the village what her husband had done. So her husband cursed her ("struck her with a curse"). Because of this she was in the fields one day getting grass when she was bitten by a snake and died. Because of the curse, you see, the snake bit her. [17/11/81]

Talk one evening centred on Bozo Akhiyani's childless wife.

NANI - You will know that she has had no children. Well, she was taken to a bhopa by Bozo, and the bhopa diagnosed that a beggar had "given her bunda". (Bunda - the five finger curse of the outstretched hand.) Apparently when she was having her palms filled at her wedding a beggar "gave her bunda" behind her back. She has not been able to have children because of it. [7/1/82]

Even where there is no direct evidence of a curse prior to misfortune occurring, a connection can be made in retrospect. One morning, not long after Nilo Adi'hra's wife, Baya, had given birth to a stillborn son, a row broke out at Arjan's house. Nilo's wife had never been popular in the hamlet, and she herself made no real effort to conform to the role of a daughter-in-law. On this occasion Zakal, Nilo's mother, had complained that her daughter-in-law had not been pulling her weight with the house-work. Nilo had leapt to her defence, and had accused his mother of striking his unborn child with a curse, thereby causing its death. Zakal was beside herself with fear and rage, that such a dreadful accusation should be made against her, and in such a public manner.

A feature of interest here is the curse is conceived of as an object with physical properties. To curse is to "strike with a curse". Once cursed the victim is prone to misfortune. The curse need not relate directly to the form the misfortune takes, but it allows it to happen.

## II. The Spell

Anyone can strike another with a curse. It requires no special skill or knowledge. Enmity can, however, be directed through more powerful channels, and more covert ones, if the knowledge and skills of the jadhuwara are employed. This also makes it possible for the nature of



the misfortune caused to be more specific.

We have seen (chapter 4.1) that jadhu can be used to harm as well as to heal. If the former has been the case then it is generally accepted that jadhu must also be employed to counter the harm done. There are certain jadhu which cause specific illness to "strike". These are known as mut.

HADHU VEAN - When a man strikes with a mut, he can destroy a person. If he is angry, he takes a handful of grain, speaks his ilim into it, and throws it so that it strikes that person. The victim may not be within striking distance, but that does not matter. If the victim's name is called when the grain is thrown then the effect is the same.

JNY - How do you know if you are the victim of a mut?

HADHU - You simply know. You have to ask the bhopa who cast the mut what the wrong is that you have done him, and then ask his forgiveness so that he will take the mut back. If you do not wish to do this then you must go to another bhopa and, if he is greater than the first, then his ilim will free you. [11/8/81]

ARJAN ADI'HRA - A mut is a type of jadhu. You take a handful of grain, speak the mut into it, and then clasp it in your hand until you can throw it at your victim. All that is required is for one of the grains to strike the victim for the mut to take effect. It may not take effect straight away. It may be five or ten years later that the victim is effected.

Only a bhopa with greater power can send the mut back from where it came. Even so, it does not effect the person it returns to. [11/8/81]

Once again we see inconsistencies between the explanations given, yet that the overall concepts are shared. The structure is shared, whereas the minor details may vary.

RANO AKHIYANI - Mut are different from jadhu. A mut is a thing of destruction, and is bad. If a man has the power and the knowledge of a mut, then he has to use it once every twelve months. It can be used on humans, in which case it will destroy them, or animals, or on a tree, which will then wither. If it is not used, then it will work itself upon the very person who possesses knowledge of it, who will suffer and die. Mut are not something to be treated lightly.

If a man has a quarrel with another man then he may use a mut on him, or on his wife and family. My paneji (ZH) has had such jadhu used on him. He was once healthy, but gradually his fingers and toes, and hands and feet began to twist and curl

up. He knew that he was the victim of jadhu, and many bhopa were called in, even a Bhangji (sweeping caste). But they could do nothing for him.

Finally he went to a bhopa and asked him to find out by divination who it was that was responsible for his misfortune. The bhopa sat with his goddess and looked at his beads, and found out the name of the oppressor. But he then confessed that the oppressor was a bhopa, and that he himself could do nothing to counter his jadhu.

"If you cannot counter his jadhu", said my banevi, "can you avenge me?" The bhopa said that he could and wrote a powerful Jadhu upon a piece of paper which had then to be delivered into the hand of the oppressor. A plan was devised. My banevi's bathrizo (BS) was sent with the piece of paper which was disguised as a letter from an old landlord. The bathrizo delivered the letter and left without staying, even for tea. When the man opened the letter and saw the paper, he realised, too late, what it was, and died soon afterwards.

My banevi still has not been cured, however, for no one can counter the power of the jadhu which is upon him. [5/8/81]

Rano's account was later reinforced by other relatives in Sirah village, who also revealed more of the details behind the banevi's affliction.

DADI ZATI - Some bhopa are even stronger than Ishvar. Look at that cripple who was brought to be healed. (A Christian healer had recently visited Arjan's house.) He has been struck by a mut and will never be cured. [11/2/82]

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Rano's banevi should be at the funeral feast you will be attending. He lives at that village. Remember, he was the man brought by Pansa (Akhiyani) to be prayed for by the healer. He has been struck by a mut, poor man. The man who struck him was a bhopa who was envious of his wife. Since then the bhopa has died, but his mut is still effective.

In the past there were many more bhopa, and they had much power with which to strike with mut. They would say to a child, "Die!", and strike it with grain, and within two and a half days it would be dead. It would always be two and a half, whether it was days, months, or years.

DADI ZATI - (She had obviously not been paying full attention to the conversation.) The mut strikes. Then, six months later you are dead. [24/4/82]

Arjan himself had lost a son soon after birth through illness, and he took the whole matter very seriously.

We have already seen how misfortune can be brought about by an act of ill-will using mut. Bad jadhu can be whispered into grain which is thrown at the victim, and it can also be written on paper which is delivered into the victim's hand. There is thus no specific way of using it.

One evening a group gathered in Ramshi Varesa's house in the aftermath of Zavo Paji's son, Babu, being "possessed". The discussion, naturally, centred upon this possession, and on possible cures. The subject of Jadhu and the power of bhopa continually re-entered the conversation.

Zavo had been describing an incident in which a bhopa was called in and had asked someone to "pull the stick". This was done, and a certain spot was determined. The bhopa then ordered that a hole be dug. They dug, and dug again, and eventually found an object. But it was all to no avail. The bhopa predicted that the victim would die within six months, as there was nothing that could be done for him. It happened just as he had predicted. On hearing this, Rani (w/o HADHU VEAN ) muttered, "A woman should never do such a thing to a man."

Later, I asked what this had meant.

ZOMI (w/o Ramshi Varesa) - It is like this. Sometimes a woman is not satisfied with her husband. He may be dark, or she may prefer another man. If this is the case it is better for her to say so openly and be sent home, than for her to keep quiet and harbour bitterness. But some women go to a bhopa and get him to stick a needle into an image of their husband. This kills him.

RAMSHI VARESA - Certain bhopa have this ilim. People come to them and ask them to work this ilim on their enemies. The bhopa then takes some grain, grinds it, and, with water, moulds it into an image. He then goes and sits in the water channel all night - "water ilim" is the most powerful, you see. You would have to be strong-willed indeed to sit in the water channel all night.

He then takes the image and waits for a certain sign from the stars. When the stars give the sign he sticks the needle in. This is done seven times, following a sign from seven stars. When he has finished, he takes the image, puts it in a bottle, and buries it. The victim then begins to feel as if needles are being driven into his chest, arms, legs, head.

This is what happened to both Rama Patel, and his wife. They were powerless and died soon because of it.

JNY - Can you not find out which bhopa is responsible?

ZOMI - How can we? If we could do this, would we not put a stop to it? [7/1/82]

We see that ilim can be used to attack others, but through the skills of a specialist. The bhopa is the instrument by which jadhu is used to

cause misfortune. The bhopa is also the instrument of diagnosis, and the instrument of cure, where the bhopa's power makes cure possible. Nevertheless, the jadhu itself is what does the damage, for it can operate even after the death of its author, and, as in the above case, even if the weapons of destruction are found.

### III. The Evil Eye

We will now examine a phenomenon which causes misfortune without the involvement of any jadhu, but which retains similar properties, in that it can act independently of its source (see also Pocock 1973:26). This is nazar, the "evil eye", against which all Kori must guard, especially if they are enjoying good fortune or success. Many things are susceptible to nazar; what they have in common being that they are a source of joy, happiness, or satisfaction.

A ragged object had been tied to the horn of a buffalo which was due to give birth.

NANI - That is a thread to prevent anybody's nazar from striking the buffalo. It is to give birth soon, you see. All it is is a string, to which are attached leather, shells, and a piece of iron.  
[27/9/81]

On one occasion men, who had gathered to help Bozo Akhiyani weed his onion field, stopped to eat the meal he had provided. Some wheat pudding was left over, which Karam Akhiyani volunteered to finish off. Nobody seemed to mind this, but, nevertheless, a visiting relative advised him: "turn and eat it with your back to us, in case you are struck by someone's nazar". [5/81]

On one of the several occasions when Babu Paji was possessed, a Bhil jadhuwara was called in. As he happened to be there, the other hamlet dwellers made the most of his presence by enquiring about various ailments from which they suffered. When asked why Baya, Mothi Akhiyani's daughter, was unable to speak properly, the jadhuwara consulted his beads and then diagnosed as follows.

CHANDAR BHIL - One night, when she was just a baby, she was asleep out in the open. At twelve midnight a female dhut (angel/messenger of Ishvar) flew over and her nazar fell upon the child. Because of this the child has never been able to speak



properly. This affliction is too powerful for me. I can do nothing. [29/8/81]

The mechanism whereby nazar causes misfortune is triggered by the envy of the less fortunate (see also Pocock 1973:27).

DADI ZATU - I used to use nash (snuff). Once, when I was helping with the weeding, I put some in my mouth and a woman who was watching said, "What a lot you use. That amount would last me for three days." Her ziv entered the nash and from that day I have suffered from a sore stomach. I also lost several teeth because of it. [29/5/82]

Nazar tends to result in the more fortunate being made less fortunate.

RAMSHI VARESA - If I were to make wheat pudding and not offer any to you, and you were sitting watching me eat it, then, if you wanted some very much, you would think about it, and eventually your ziv would enter the pudding. Then, after a few days, if I were to have a sore stomach I would think back and say, "Ah, JNY's nazar has struck me. There was evil in that pudding."

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes. That is how it is. There was a certain Sindi who had a very good beam in his roof. A friend saw it and desired it. Soon it was cracking, weakened by woodworm. "Stop!" said the Sindi. "Your nazar is breaking my beam."

BURO MAYANI - Do you see this chilum (upright pipe) I am holding? Do you see how beautiful it is? Well, it won't draw properly. Why? Because I brought it out, and a friend who was a Sevvid saw it and said, "Oh! That is a beautiful chilum." Now it does not work. His ziv has entered it. [3/5/81]

Nazar appears to be envy which has taken on a physical dimension and entered the object which has attracted it. It is important to realise, however, that nazar can strike on its own, without any conscious decision being made by the envier. Rather than entailing an act of ill-will on the part of the less fortunate, nazar is a more or less inevitable consequence of something desirable being brought to the attention of someone who consciously, or unconsciously, desires it. It is not the whole ziv that enters the object desired, for that would leave the desirer lifeless. But, the act of envying would automatically detach a part of you, and attach it to the object envied. This appears to upset the balance in that object and misfortune results. (Nichter - 1977:190 - describes the evil eye of the Arica Nut Belt of South India, dristhi, as "an expression of the buta [ghost] in man".)



Nazar is itself perceived to be evil, but the person who has triggered its mechanism is not necessarily condemned as evil also. We are all seen to contain the potential of nazar, and it is more the responsibility of potential victims to make sure that it is never given the opportunity to strike.

The source of nazar is not always seen to be entirely innocent of its operation, however (see also Pocock 1973:30,33).

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Nazar is not always unintentional. In fact a lot of people strike with nazar on purpose, that is, people with ilim. Then you must go to the bhopa who, by means of tying thread and the power of his dev, cures the victim. [1/5/82]

To protect a person or an object from nazar one has to either take pains not to attract attention, or else make that person or object less attractive. Hence the objects tied to the horn of the buffalo mentioned above.

RAMSHI VARESA - People tie threads on children to protect them from nazar. It is in case someone sees a beautiful child, and their ziv enters it and it becomes ill. [3/5/81]

Zavo Paji's baby son was crying and where was no-one at home to look after him. Baya went over to comfort him while Dadi Zati and Netha discussed the fact that he was suffering from a rash.

NETHA - The rash? Oh, that happened because Baya (w/o Zavo) has not tied threads on the boy. [15/6/81]

The tying on of threads is not just a means of denying attractiveness. It is also a form of protection from general misfortune, and is an integral part of the bhopa's practice. When it comes to curing the effects of nazar it is also very relevant.

RAMSHI VARESA - If you are struck by nazar, then you have to tie black thread around your neck, or arms, or legs. Otherwise you will have to go to a bhopa for a cure. [3/5/81]

The concept of nazar raises some interesting points in our study of the beliefs which motivate Kori action. What could be interpreted as an act of generosity, and therefore of dharam, such as the offering of hospitality or the sharing of a meal, could as easily be seen as an act to ward off nazar.

Just as to invite envy is degrading for the envier, so that which attracts the envy is also degraded. Envy, then, is a double-edged sword

which contributes a fair amount to Kori social and economic interaction at an everyday level. Its impact on the social life of the Patidar, neatly summed up by Pocock, could equally be applied to the Kori.

the fear of najar defines the way in which wealth may be enjoyed, that is with modesty; it requires all men to be generous according to their means (Pocock 1973:39).

We have so far looked at misfortune which has resulted from enmity borne by one individual towards another, ill-will being channelled into a specific action which brings about this misfortune, and where the danger has come from the outside, whether intentional or unintentional. We shall now turn briefly to acts of misfortune which are, in a way, brought upon oneself without the involvement of any other party.

#### IV. The Oath

Misfortune will result if one swears falsely in oath.

HADHU VEAN - Whereas the Sindi believe in the Koran and say "Koran's kasam", we say "ham". We can say "Brother's ham", "Eyes' ham", "Mother/Goddess's ham".

If two people quarrel, and are eventually brought together by an arbitrator, but both claiming to have the truth on their side, then, if they are Sindi, they can lift the Koran, or if they are Hindu, they can lift the Gita. If any misfortune then befalls either party, or their family, or their animals, then people will say, "They have eaten ham, that is why misfortune has befallen them." [15/11/81]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - If two men are arguing over the rightful ownership of an object, and one of them says, "Brother's ham!", then the other man will desist, even if he knows that he is in the right, for he will acknowledge that the matter is now out of his hands. It is in the hands of Ishvar.

Take this motorcycle, for example. It belongs to Jalu, but if you were to say to Jalu that it was yours and not his, what would Jalu say? He would say, "Eat the Gita's ham, otherwise I will bring a court case against you!"

I do not know why we say "eat". It is just what is said. One can say, "Eat your mother's ham!", or, "Sister's", or, "Ishvar's", or, "Gita's", or, "Mother/Goddess's", or "Eyes". [16/11/81]

NILO PAJI - If I were to take your axe, and an argument were to result as to whose it was, and I was to say, "It is mine, by my brother's ham, then you would say, "All right, you have eaten ham. If you are a liar then you will suffer misfortune. If you speak the truth then nothing will happen to you."

We say, "Gita's ham", "Brother's ham", etc., but the danger is to the man himself. [17/11/81]

Ideally, taking oath by objects which are of such importance in the life of the Kori may appear to be an act not to be treated lightly. In practice, when there is such a quarrel one can hear oaths taken on many such objects by both parties in defence of their point of view. In the heat of the moment the long-term implications of one's words are often of secondary importance when set against the defence of one's honour, or economic benefit. When oath-taking is done in the cold light of reason, then it is not taken so lightly, however.

Dadi Zati had had twelve hundred rupees stolen from her hiding place inside some mattresses in Arjan's house. No-one knew who had taken it, but Nilo, Lakshman Adi'hra's son, and his wife were the principle suspects. In anger and frustration Dadi Zati declared that she was going to have the Gita "lifted up", so that if the money was not returned then a fatal illness would befall the culprit.

In the late evening most of the village descended upon Arjan's house to discuss the matter. They were lead by Satruga and Lakshman Bhagat. Satruga, Lavi Dungarani, and various others spoke gravely of the power of the Gita. They spoke of incidents in the past where it had been so lifted up.

Dadi Zati then held everybody's attention. She spoke of how generous she had always been, despite her lack of any real wealth. She asked how it was possible that anyone could have dealt her such a blow. She finished by demanding that the Gita be lifted up for the truth to be found.

This suggestion, however, was greeted with pleas from the gathering that this not be resorted to. The anonymous thief was implored by several leading characters to return the money: "Just replace it in the night when no one can see you. You will be forgiven."

Satruga Bhagat warmed to this theme. "Yes," he declared generously, "I will give a Bhao in celebration and thanksgiving if this happens."

"Not so fast", cautioned Lavi wryly. "Wait until the money is returned before you give the Bhao."

There was an air of merriment about the gathering. Everyone was fond of Dadi Zati, and, although the sum lost was not very large and no one was prepared to go as far as to lift the Gita to get it back, they were making an effort on her behalf.

The question was raised of what was to happen if the money was not returned. Satruga rose to his full ominous stature. "If this is the case

then I will go myself and bring the Gita from the house of a relative of mine, and I assure you that its power will be unleashed." The crowd hushed in awe of these melodramatic words. "But, if the money is returned, then even the thief will benefit. For I will give a Bhao for the dharam of his ziv."

People began to drift away, feeling that the matter was resolved for the moment. Others stayed to chat. One phrase was continuously heard repeated: "No one can escape the Gita." The awesome threat to the thief was constantly reinforced.

By the next morning the money had still not been returned. Gradually talk about it died down, although the loss remained a bitter memory to Dadi Zati.

## V. Supernatural Retribution

The oath, sworn lightly or in earnest upon an object of value, can be seen as a sanction which, if abused, will bring misfortune upon yourself. When in the wrong the pressure upon the individual is to confess guilt rather than to risk the oath. At a less personal level, you can have the power of various deities or saints invoked against you if you have transgressed. Again the indirect responsibility for the misfortune lies with the victim.

One evening a series of thefts which had occurred at a Christian village near Mirpur Khas were being discussed.

DADI ZATI - Is it not terrible? You would think that those Christians, who do so much bhakti, would have protection against such things.

BAYA (w/o Nilo Adi'hra) - What can Parbhu Isu (Lord Jesus) do about theft? Nothing! The only one who has the power over such things is Rama Pir. He can cause thieves to be blinded.

DADI ZATU - Not anymore. He has lost his power now. I have heard of people who went to him knowing who their robbers were, and nothing happened to them. [6/9/81]

Despite Dadi Zatu's cynicism there was widespread belief that Rama Pir, if invoked, could inflict blindness upon a thief. This tradition was related to the incident which had led to his shrine being built at Tando Ala Yar in the first place. Whilst coming to the aid of a couple of his pilgrims who had been robbed, he had cursed the robbers who had been struck blind.

BABU PAJI - If you have been robbed, then Rama Pir can show you who the thief is. All you have to do is donate five rupees in offering at his shrine and bow down in his worship there. Then, if the guilty person does not quickly return what has been stolen, Rama Pir will send blindness upon him. [29/8/81]

## VI. Rage

We have moved from enmity arising outwith the individual, in the forms of cursing and jadhu, to that which arises within the individual and returns to bring misfortune, in the forms of false oaths and revenge invoked due to an evil act such as theft. Nazar is the anomaly here, pertaining, as it does, to both categories, for it results often from the pride of self as well as the envy of another. Another concept which results in ill-will and misfortune, but which is not blamed directly upon its perpetrator, is that of rage, of "kar".

The following conversation took place during the course of one of Babu Paji's possessions. Having temporarily quietened him down, we were discussing his actions, searching for some explanation.

DEVO ZANDARIYA - What happened this time?

HAKU (w/o Zavo Paji) - Oh, just what usually happens. He raises his voice, some girls laugh at him, and then he starts to shake.

ZAVO PAJI - Sounds more like kar than anything else.

ZOMI (w/o Ramshi Varesa) - Yes, it will just be kar. Do you know that he was even throwing grain at my Rani (daughter) so that she would be possessed. Not that she was!

JNY - What is kar?

ZOMI - It is merely when you have a great rage. [7/1/82]

Anyone can be subjected to kar. Kar knows no reason, and respects no-one's character or dignity.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Kar is when someone becomes angry. The Sindi say that it is when Satan rises within them, causing them to be angry. If, for example, I am sitting here quite happily, and a child comes up to me and disturbs me, and I were then to fly into a rage and shout abuse at the child, (he demonstrated dramatically and with highly imaginative abuse), then this is what we would call kar. [22/2/82]



Kar is something which is in the nature of everyone, as is nazar. It merely requires certain circumstances to bring it to the surface.

JNY - What happens when people commit suicide. Is this not a pap?

MAMA SAHADEVA - Yes there is pap, but these things are done in anger and are the fault of the anger.

Mama Sahadeva then went on to tell me of a girl from a nearby village who had shot herself in anger when she heard of her parents unscrupulous attempts to remarry her for their financial gain. [27/9/81]

Kar is impersonal. It is a condition which must be suffered, but which is not the fault of the person in which it arises. It is not pre-meditated but has a will of its own.

## VII. Summary

In our discussion of ill-will a re-curring theme has been the objectification of the harmful act. The curse, once spoken, remained over the victim, opening up the possibility of misfortune befalling them. Similarly, the mut operated at a distance, continuing to work on its victim long after its author had died. The oath returned to wreak revenge upon its misuser. The curse of Rama Pir, if invoked, inflicted the thief with blindness, although the theft was the cause of this.

Nazar itself operated automatically, punishing pride and immodesty without first consulting the envier from whom it originated, although it could be manipulated by human intervention. Finally, in kar we see another emotion which has a will of its own, and causes misery when the opportunity presents itself.

Lienhardt (1961:Ch4) attempts to explain similar interpretations among the Dinka of Southern Sudan as being due to their lack of a concept of "the mind" - all experience is therefore external to the individual. This rather interesting notion could be used by a "Western" ethnographer to explain the Kori perceptions discussed in this section. Such an approach, however, would have to adopt the view that, as the mind does exist, the Kori have got things wrong. This is something which, as ethnographers, we are not qualified to do.

The curse, the spell, the oath, and divine retribution act as overt sanctions, the evil eye and the rage as covert ones. Both serve to provide a basis of equality within the Kori village, where fortune is shared with misfortune, and antagonism is minimised. Nevertheless, within even such constraints as these, it is still possible for antagonism to occur.

(While we do suggest that such perception of the causes of misfortune effects social relationships, we would not agree with Evans-Pritchard - 1937: Part1 - when he argues that such perceptions exist mainly for this function.)

#### SECTION 4.5: SUPERNATURAL ENMITY - POSSESSION

Ghosts, or bhut are seen by the kori as the source of many human misfortunes. They often display a degree of antagonism towards the living, and this will be explored further in 6.4 below. They are considered to be distinct from what the Muslims recognise as dzinn, although there is sometimes confusion between the two. Also amongst some Kori the words "bhut" and "dzinn" are used interchangeably. They are both, however, distinct from the dev (gods/goddesses).

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Dzinn have existed in the world since its beginning. They are like Satan; one and the same. Bhut are the ziv of people who have been rejected from "heaven" and who wander the earth (see also 2.1). They can possess you and cause you harm . My father once suffered at the hands of a bhut. Whereas dzinn are not of man, bhut are of man. [15/5/81]

##### I. Bhut

Bhut share with the Kori the experience of being human. They are directly related as kin to the living. In a sense, the antagonism of bhut towards the living can be seen indirectly as being the antagonism of fellow Kori, fellow zach members, fellow kin. It is accepted that the attitude of bhut towards those among the living is one of little love.

MAMI - There are still bhut about in this village (Sirah). The

thumping of the stirrer on the great cooking pot has often been heard over by that Limbari tree. (The large Limbari tree, which stood in the clearing between the Adi'hra hamlet and the house of Mothi, provided welcome shade in which animals were tethered and daytime guests were entertained.)

NANI - Yes, think of how many animals have died in that clearing.

DADI ZATU - Did you not hear what happened at Mothi's Bhao? The bhagat were singing away when suddenly two big, heavy, metal trunks fell on top of a metal basin making an enormous noise. The singing stopped. Someone said it was a cat, but a cat could not move such well-positioned and heavy trunks.

Bhut are always about. You hear them rattling things at night. [31/7/81]

We saw in 2.1 that bhut were ziv which had yet to complete their full life-cycle and attain release, either into "heaven" or into a new life. Why?

DADI ZATU - They say that it was Huzo's sister's bhut that was giving Rhadu's family a lot of trouble. It is always those who die young who remain as bhut. We who are old, why should we remain here? [37/7/81]

JNY - (Conversation had been about rebirth.) And what about those who die unnatural deaths?

BAPU AGISANI - Those who die such deaths become bhut. [30/4/82]

The factor common to the existence of bhut appears to be an unsatisfactory or unfulfilled life experience. Bhut, are ziv which remain after death and continue to desire some aspects of the lifestyle of the living. It is not only those who die young or of unnatural (i.e. accidental) deaths who become bhut, although they may be more prone to doing so.

ZOMI - After death the ziv actually remains in the walls and the roof of the house until the funeral is performed (see 6.4). Only after that has been done does it leave.

JNY - And if it does not leave, even after the funeral, what do you do?

DADI ZATI - If it remains, it becomes a bhut. [6/6/82]

DADI ZATI - When a person dies, then a Bhao must be held. Up until the time of the Bhao the spirit of the deceased roams about the hamlet. When the Bhao is given, the way to Ishvar is opened up and the spirit departs. If nothing is given then the spirit remains, becoming a bhut, or a dzinn, and causing trouble.

From this we can see that bhut come into existence when ziv are prevented from completing their life-cycle. We saw earlier in 2.1 Ramshi Varesa's explanation of bhut being created through the mistakes of Ishvar's messengers (dhut), when ziv are wrongly taken and returned too late to prevent burial, leaving them without a body.

DADI ZATI - When people die their ziv go with Ishvar. Occasionally, however, their ziv remain, if they have died an unnatural death, or for some such reason. Then they possess people. People have fits of shaking, and lose control of themselves. Some fall into the fire, as was the case with Rama's first fiancée, or some into the canal. You could be lying in your bed and the bhut would just throw you off.

Bhut are always after something, whether it be a cloth for their head, or a comb for their hair. It is the job of the bhopa to find out what it is they wish and to satisfy their need.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Bhut are clever. They can possess you only if you fear them. So they go around making noises and throwing things. You are woken up and say, "What is that?" You are touched on the shoulder and you jump. "What was that?" If you are afraid, then they can possess you. If not, then they are harmless. [26/8/81]

One bhut which is perpetually feared is that of the woman who has died in childbirth, the sureli (see also Pocock, 1973:34).

ARJAN ADI'HRA - The sureli is very dangerous. Her feet point the wrong way. She lives out in the jungle. There used to be many, but not so now.

She appears to men sometimes as an old woman, sometimes as a woman with her stomach ripped open and her insides hanging out, sometimes as a young and beautiful woman, who tries to seduce men, to their peril. [15/5/81]

Perhaps because of this fear of the sureli, those of the Mevasi Koli caste continue to cremate their women who have died in childbirth, whilst burying their other dead.

To sum up, bhut can be seen as ziv which have yet to complete their current life-cycle. They remain amongst the living, inhabiting space without bodily form, whether because of an unfulfilled life through an early or accidental death, or because they have been prevented from gaining release by their relations' neglect of the necessary funeral rites. They remain because they desire something. It may be material pleasure,

emotional ties, revenge - on individuals or on the the living in general (e.g. sureli), or for the way of release to be opened for them. If they wish a particular bhut to cease to trouble them, it is up to the living to discover what it is that they desire and fulfil it.

## II. Bhut Possession

The Kori villagers were never slow, if the mood was right, to recite stories about bhut. Bhut can trouble people in different ways, through madness, illness, or general misfortune. It is important to realise that these are all perceived to be forms of possession warranting exorcism.

Bapu Agisani had been visiting his banevi (ZH) who had cancer of the throat and was close to death. Although staying at his banevi's village, he came each day to Arjan Adi'hra's hamlet, for, he said, the smell at his banevi's made eating difficult. Once, while at Arjan's, he related the events of the previous night. These were relayed to us the following evening.

DADI ZATU - Bapu was given new quilts, and a pillow which had been sewn up only the previous day. He said that twice, as he lay on his bed in the dark, he saw a light coming from behind him. He thought it was someone flashing a torch around, and did not bother to look to see its source. But an old man who was lying on a bed nearby saw that the light was coming from the pillow itself. He cried out to Bapu to get up quickly and move the pillow. And at that very moment a young boy, about the age of Buro here (10 years), was seized in a fit.

DADI ZATI - It must have been a bhut or something. What else could it have been?

NANI - That place has something about it. There are many people from there who have gone mad. And there is Bapu's banevi. And now this.

DADI ZATI - It must be the spirit of a Pir (Muslim holy man) who they have disturbed. All who have been seized with this madness have been taken to the bhopa and cured. But then another of them has been seized.

ZAKAL - Has the banevi any children?

DADI ZATI - Yes, three older daughters. He had one son, but he died after twelve days. He was born deformed, like this. (She stretched her arms around her back and made a face.) I tell you that there is something wrong in that family for Ishvar to do all these things to them.

ZAKAL - There was a man who died out my way (i.e. the area where she had grown up) and he returned to take ten people



away with him: women, children, everyone. They just all died, one by one. [17/5/82]

ARJAN ADI'HRA - I remember, when I was young my mother and I both ate the meat of a pig. Apparently a woman had died inside a brick oven which was beside the path we took to the fields, and her bhut lay there. As we walked past this oven, the bhut entered into the pig meat which we were carrying. When we ate it my stomach began to hurt, so I left most of it. But my mother did not leave any, and she suffered much. When something like that happens we get a bhopa to drive the bhut out. [15/5/81]

Babu Paji was a young man who was being possessed on and off for several months. His first attack came six months after he had been married.

A commotion was heard from within the house of Zavo Paji where Babu lived. We investigated. In the inner room lay Babu, held down by Hadhu (his ZH) and Manoo (his "FB"). Babu was trembling and, intermittently, he would struggle violently. At short, regular intervals he was admitting a barking cry in his alto voice. This was a cry which, at first, we had taken to be the bark of a dog. On this occasion Babu's parents, Zavo and Haku, were absent and Babu had been left with the responsibility of running the household.

As I watched, Dundi (d/o Ramshi Varesa) came into the room bearing a shard of clay pot upon which were smoking cakes of buffalo dung. Nilo Kotwar, who was present, took this and anointed it with ghi. This produced a lot of smoke and a fierce smell. The shard was then rotated around Babu's head.

I asked various people what was going on.

BAYA (w/o Viro Paji) - The wind suddenly rose within him. We do not know whether it is a dev or a dzinn that is in him. Suddenly he struck the ground. Then he struck himself, shouting, "Get out of me! Leave me, Seducer of sisters!" He has been like this ever since.

NILA (d/o Ramshi Varesa) - He was asking his younger brother for money, but he would not give him any. Then this happened.

Nila did not seem to take the matter too seriously. In fact, most people were either drifting off or were chatting and joking amongst themselves. Manoo asked me, being a Christian, to pray. Ramshi was annoyed by such a suggestion.

RAMSHI VARESA - What good will praying do? What he needs is a bhopa.

Just then Chandar the Bhil arrived, one of the Bhil family who were employed by Bharat Patel. He had been brought by Nilo Kotwar, Babu's "FB". The interest of the bystanders was kindled and we all gathered round. Babu was carried out from the room and put on a bed. His cries immediately ceased, although his hands still trembled.

RAMSHI - See! He has stopped. He must only be affected when he is inside the house.

BAYA - No, he was outside when he was first struck.

RAMSHI - But I am sure that that house has a bhut.

Chandar Bhil approached the bed. In his hand was a rosary of ceramic beads. Each bead was half green and half white, the white half bearing green markings. Chandar, whenever he studied these beads, treated them as living things, constantly whispering to them and caressing and kissing them.

First he sprayed Babu's face with saliva from his mouth, whilst rotating his beads in an anti-clockwise direction over him several times. He then sprayed Babu's body in a similar fashion. Then he sat with us on a bed that was adjacent to Babu's, and examined his beads. He asked what the day was, and when the attack had begun. He asked if this had ever happened before.

BAYA - Yes, once. It was the day before he went to his wedding. We had threads bound on him and he recovered.

CHANDAR BHIL - Which dev do you keep?

BAYA - Kari'ori

CHANDAR - Is the hand of another bhopa upon him?

BAYA - Yes, he is under a bhopa who protects him, but who lives quite a distance away.

CHANDAR - If this is so then I can do little without his bhopa's permission. But, I will try. Could someone bring to me a glass, and a stick of incense.

A glass tumbler was brought, filled with water, and placed on the ground beside the bed. Chandar quickly drew a circle around it on the ground. He then sat on the ground facing the glass and demanded a handful of grain, which Nilo Kotwar rushed to get. Meanwhile, Chandar studied his beads.

When the grains were brought they were also placed upon the ground and a circle drawn around them. The incense was lit and stuck upright in the ground. Before he did this, however, Chandar held it for a while over the glass of water, trapping its smoke with his hand. He then took a pinch of several grains and gently spat on them, chanting under his breath. These grains were then dropped one by one into the water. They sank to the bottom of the glass. Everyone watched, fascinated.

Chandar repeated this process with some more grains. One remained floating on top of the water. He bent over his beads and studied them. Then he repeated the process again, and again. After a while he no longer spat into the beads or chanted over them. Eventually one quarter of the total pile of grains had been dropped into the glass, two of which were floating on top of the water.

CHANDAR - (To Manoo) Take this glass and rotate it seven times over Babu's body!

Manoo did as he had been instructed. Going round to the other side of Babu's bed so that we could all see him, he rotated the glass in an anti-clockwise direction.

CHANDAR - Now, would a sister of Babu please get him to drink from the glass!

Manoo got Babu to sit up. "Get up Babu!", he cried. "Yes, Kaka (FyB)!", Babu said in reply. His younger sister held the glass to his mouth - but later confided to the women, who were concerned about this very obvious breach of caste, magnified by the "lower caste Bhil's use of his highly polluting saliva, that Babu had not touched the water at all.

CHANDAR - (With Ramshi nodding in agreement) If all these grains (he indicated the pile on the ground) had sunk to the bottom of the glass without floating, I would be unable to help the boy. But, as you can see, two are floating, and so maybe I can.

What I want you to do is this. Bring the boy's bhopa here, or else go and see him. If he is willing to cure the boy, then so be it. But, if not, then I still will need his permission before I can act. The boy is within his control, and without his permission I am not free to do anything.

Now, take the water that remains, Manoo, and sprinkle it over the house and over the household. Pour what remains at the foot of the tree which gives this house its shade. Then scatter these grains for the animals to eat.

Manoo did as he had been instructed, and the entire gathering was sprinkled, along with the house, the uthak, the manger, etc. A period of general consultation followed, when bystanders made use of the occasion to seek cures for their own misfortunes from the bhopa.

CHANDAR (eventually) - Now I must go. Babu should be alright, but, if he has another attack, you must do this. Take a torch and shine it into his eyes. If he does not blink then you will know that it is a bhut that has possessed him. The sign of the bhut is if you see in his eyes the image of his body upside down.

We then dispersed and went to our beds. Babu was still giving the occasional tremble, but Chandar assured us that he would eventually quieten down. Babu spent the whole of the following day in bed. [29/8/81]

This event was kept to within the hamlet itself, apart from the involvement of Nilo Kotwar and Manoo, who were also of the Paji Zach, and Chandar Bhil himself. I mentioned it to Dadi Zati the following day. She knew nothing of what had happened, but, nevertheless, was not slow to venture an explanation of what the source of Babu's trouble was.

DADI ZATI - Oh, Babu has been troubled in this way before. They called in their bhopa, a Paji, who bound threads on him. But the trouble itself stems from the time when he fell from the tractor-trailer. That is when it all started. [30/8/81]

Here Dadi Zati was referring to the incident (see 4.1) when Babu had been severely winded, and was believed to have given up his ziv. Eventually his ziv had returned and he had breathed again, but, according to Dadi Zati, this temporary absence had allowed his body to be possessed by another. As to who was possessing him, this was never fully settled while we were in Sirah. Babu, himself, had his own view of the matter.

JNY - What was the matter with you that day when you trembled?

BABU PAJI - I was possessed by the Pir whose grave is in our graveyard.

JNY - What did he want?

BABU - He did not want anything. But he was angry with me because I had disturbed him once when I was over that way.

JNY - Did you know that it was him?

BABU - Yes, he told me and I knew.

JNY - What did you give him to appease him?

BABU - He was given sweet rice. Actually, it was Rhadu (Akhiyani) who made the offering. Every year he cooks sweet rice for the Pir. You see, Radhu's cotton pickers have to pick in that area. The rice is cooked in the fields and an offering is burned at the grave of the Pir. Otherwise the Pir would trouble the cotton pickers. [18/10/81]

Other villagers, however, were less certain of the cause of Babu's troubles. Three months later he was once again seized in an unnatural fit. Once again, attracted by the sudden commotion, we went along to Zavo Paji's house.

Zavo Paji was present on this occasion, and sat with Ramshi Varesa by the fire, outside the door of his inner room. Haki, Babu's mother, sat with them. Inside the house Babu was being held on the floor on his knees by Karamshi (his MB) and Hadhu (his ZH). A pile of grain lay in front of him. Viro Paji's daughter, Rani, came in with a griddle of smoking dung cakes annointed with ghi and this was rotated around his head. Babu, apart from the regular barking noise he was emitting, was oblivious to the world. He was trembling violently.

We all stood and watched. The room was full of people - women, children, and one or two men also. Some were apprehensive and wide-eyed. Others were grinning in a relaxed manner. Eventually Chali, Rano Akhiyani's wife, suggested that he be lifted onto a bed, as this had been what had quietened him down on the previous occasion. This was done and Babu quietened immediately. We then all drifted out to the warmth of the fire where the case was discussed and diagnoses attempted.



RAMSHI VARESA - If he were possessed by a dev then one would be afraid of him. But there is no fear of him, so what could it be?

DEVO ZANDARIYA - True. And if it is a dev or a bhut, then it quickly lets you know what it is that it wants, and when it has been satisfied it goes. But with Babu you are never sure of anything.

HAKU - He did say that once he saw four people coming for him.

RAMSHI - Four people... He has said many things, and still he continues to be troubled.

DEVO - What happened this time?

HAKU - Oh, what usually happens. He raises his voice, some girls laugh at him, and then he starts to shake.

ZAVO PAJI - Sounds more like kar than anything else.

ZOMI - Yes, it will just be kar. Do you know that he was even throwing grain at my Rani so that she would be possessed. Not that she was!

JNY - What is kar?

ZOMI - Kar is merely when you have a great rage.

DEVO - A good cure would be to take a staff and give him a few good blows over the head. [7/1/82]

The Kori never expressed the notion that bhut were given the task of punishing men for their sins (Nichter 1977:184). Their explanations of possession steered clear of this moral dimension.

### III. Prevention and Cure

Possession by dev/mata will be discussed more fully in 5.2. For the moment let us look at how bhut possession is conceptualised. A common remedy appears to be the use of sacred smoke, that is, the smoke produced when ghi is poured onto smouldering dung-cakes. This ties in with the notion that the ziv has the physical form of breath. The body is occupied by the ziv, that is, breath, which resides in the heart (see 4.1). On possession the wind is said to "rise" inside the person possessed. The heart races in fear, and this makes one even more susceptible to possession. Sacred smoke is used to drive the possessing force out of the body. Nilo, having already suffered from the temporary absence of



his ziv, was perceived by Dadi Zati to be more susceptible than most to being possessed.

There are different ways of preventing and curing possession. Prevention is always preferable, and the Kori will take precautions if they see the need, and if they know how. The Kunri bhagat once spoke gravely of what was, in his opinion, a general lack of spiritual fervour in Sirah Village, and of the dangers which the villagers were thus exposing themselves to.

KUNRI BHAGAT - Tell me, do you hear the "Krr! Krr! Krr!" of the owls at night? And the "Ti! Ti! Ti!" of the magpies? And the dogs, when they go "Ooooo!"? This means that all is not well within the village, that something is going on, that evil is about. Now we, that is The Bhagat (Lakshman) and I, keep saying that what we should all do is get together for evening worship. People could even give half a mond of grain each and distribute bhao. Then the village would be safe at night. Did we not agree to do this last night?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Yes, but what they agree to do at night they forget about in the morning. [22/4/81]

We see, however, that these two were more the exception than the rule in Sirah. The Kunri Bhagat, especially, had a great zeal for Bhakti, and tended to let this influence his opinions on most matters.

The general rule appeared to be that, apart from precautions taken within the overall framework of the burial/funeral rituals, bhut were guarded against only at the specific times when they were seen to be a danger.

DADI ZATI - There was once a kori thief, an Akhiyani. One night he was stealing onions when he was caught by their owner. He climbed over the wall to escape, but was struck on the head by an iron bar, and the iron sunk into his head. He managed to reach the home of Shama, Lakshman's wife's father, before he died.

He was from Bukera, and when they heard that he was dead, they fetched him home and buried him in the graveyard there. But the Sindi devotee, who lived at the graveyard, had a dream in which he was shown that the man buried there had been a thief. He complained to the Kori, demanding that either they remove the body, or else that they build a pakka (brick) tomb over it, in the manner in which Sindi tombs are built. Otherwise he was afraid that, being a thief, the bhut would escape from its grave and roam the graveyard scaring people away. (The devotee would have earned his living from visitors to the graveyard.)

And so the Akhiyani bought one hundred rupees worth of bricks and built a pakka tomb over the grave in the manner of the Sindi. The Sindi had threatened to call in the Bhangji you see. (Bhangji = Sweeper caste) [21/5/82]

Whether or not bricks are successful in preventing bhut from leaving their body, it is worthy of comment that an equally plausible reason for the devotee's anxiety was that, it being a respectable Sindi graveyard, the presence of a grave which was so obviously Hindu might "lower the tone" of the place. His response was to ask the Hindus to bring the grave up to Sindi standards, or else to remove the body altogether. Bearing in mind the Koris' own sense of superiority over the Sindi, however, it would be unlikely that they would feel comfortable with such an explanation, and the one about the bhut may have suited them better. Similar causal dilemmas faced by the Kori will be explored in Chapters 6 and 7.

So far we have looked at Bhakti and at brick graves as two means of protection from bhut, but have found both to be exceptions rather than the rule. What then are the normally accepted ways of containing bhut?

DADI ZATI - What the bhopa do is drive iron nails into the four sides of the skull of the corpse. This will hold the bhut in. [26/8/81]

Here we appear to be in more widely accepted areas of belief, for the kori value iron greatly as a material which is a protection from evil; something we have already seen in our examination of the concept of nazar (Chapter 4.4). Pocock (1973:35) states that the Patidar of Gujarat also use iron as a protection, for it makes bhut burst into flames and disappear.

Zakal picked up her long kitchen knife and said to her daughter, Ganga, that she would need such a knife at her wedding. I asked her why this was so.

ZAKAL - During the days of her wedding she will get her palms filled (see 6.2), and will she not first place a knife across them? It is to protect her from evil. Did Babu (Paji) not have a knife when he was married last year?

You ask Nani. Your Mama's Bathriza (MBBS) suffered much because he lacked a knife when he was married. Eventually he became so ill that he had to be taken to many bhopa and had to have many threads bound on him at great expense.

A knife is always necessary for protection. Look at Huro's younger brother's wife! Three days after giving birth she was taken home by her brother and fell out of the bus. She died, and three days later her baby girl died.

JNY - What has a knife to do with birth?

ZAKAL - A knife must be beside you when you give birth. Look at Viro (Paji)'s daughter! She died soon after childbirth, her baby dying at birth. That is how dangerous that time is. And if you ever have to leave a newborn baby on its own you must leave iron by its side as protection. Otherwise it will have evil dreams and soon fall ill. Look at Netha's daughter! She is dumb. [30/11/81]

Zakal's statements, apart from supporting the protective qualities of iron, illustrate sequences of explanation whereby misfortunes are explained in retrospect by an accepted formula - "misfortune occurs because..." A reason is then sought from one of the many plausible ones available. In these cases it is the lack of an iron object at certain strategic moments in time. But there are also other ways of countering bhut.

JNY - What do you do if the ziv does not leave after the funeral rites have been performed?

DADI ZATI - If it remains it becomes a bhut. Then we have to call in a bhopa. He will go to the grave, recite his ilim, and drive a wooden spike into the head of the grave (i.e. not into the corpse itself). The bhut cannot return to the household after this has been done. [6/6/82]

Here, then, is another method of containment (see also Phillimore 1980:114). But it is apparent that such methods vary, depending upon which specialist is called in, and upon the experience and knowledge of the informant.

#### IV. The Specialists of Cure

The chief specialist called upon in this field is the bhopa, who draws upon the power of his dev. Before looking more closely at the bhopa, however, let us look at another specialist who lived near Sirah, and whose services were available if requested.

We have seen that, when asked about his possession, Babu Paji had felt that the Pir, whose grave was nearby, had been the cause. The bhut of Sindi Pir are generally felt to be prone to possessing people. Perhaps this is because, after their death, their ziv are encouraged to remain in touch with the living for the benefit of the latter who continuously present them with offerings in return for favours. Unlike the Kori ziv, which are encouraged to leave their cycle of life as soon as possible, the

ziv of Pir stay on, and continue to play an active part in the Sindis' life struggle.

(It is interesting to note that the the family of the old patel, Rama, having built a pakka brick tomb for him, perceived him more and more in the manner in which the Sindi perceived of their Pir - see 4.1,IV.)

At the time of fieldwork, a new hamlet was built by some Sindi tenants near the local graveyard. This was discussed by the fire one evening at Arjan's.

MALI - Are they not scared, living where they do?

MAMA SAHADEVA - No, they are not. When they first came they cooked a big pot of rice in the Pir's name. They are not bothered by him at all. I remember, they invited me over to eat with them. I thanked them and said no.

NANI - Eat rice with Sindi! Don't you ever dare do such a thing, my boy! [2/12/81]

Pir can possess. In doing so they can also give power. This happens, as we shall see, in much the same way as the bhopa is given power by his dev. We have seen above how, when the possession of Babu was once being discussed, it was suggested that what he needed was a good blow over the head.

RAMSHI VARESA - No! That would be very dangerous. Only Hadur would be able to do such a thing.

(Later, I asked him who Hadur was.) Hadur is a Kori. He burns offerings at the grave of the Pir, and the Pir lays faith upon him. Every time he hears the twin pipes playing he starts to shake.

Once we were all going off to Radhu (Akhiyani's) wedding. We had the wedding party with us and Hadur joined the party. The moment the drum was struck he began to shake, and he shook for an hour. Eventually one of the elders gave him fifty rupees just to be rid of him. He also shakes if he is angry, or if he is teased by being offered alcohol, for he says that his Pir gets angry. [8/1/82]

The intervention of a Pir worshipper such as Hadur in the case of a possession, however, is the exception rather than the rule. The rule is the bhopa. In the next Chapter we will examine the bhopa in more detail. Before doing so let us see how the Kori see the bhopa in action. It was planned, for example, to take Babu off to the Paji temple to be



cured once and for all of his affliction. Viro Paji explained to me what would happen there.

VIRO PAJI - If you wish to see a real spectacle you should go with Zavo the day after tomorrow. He will be going with his wife, and with Babu and his wife, to our temple, which is to the north of Tando Sumaro. At least five bhopa will be there, and they will be a sight worth seeing. Many people will come, and there will be sweet rice in the evening of the eighth, and a goat will be killed on the morning of the ninth. (Viro was referring here to the festival of the Nine Northa which coincided with the planned visit - see 5.3 below.)

Babu will be taken there to have the bhut driven out. The bhopa will slap his face twice, then demand the bhut to identify itself. Then Babu will answer that it is So-and-so Pir, or just So-and-so. The bhopa will then ask of the bhut what it is that it wants, and Babu will say what it is. Then the bhopa will ask the bhut to leave in return for what has been requested. Then it will leave and will not return. [3/10/81]

Here is another example of bhopa in action.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Near Nawabshah there were two people, a kaka (FyB) and his bathrizi (BD), who were asleep out in the open on a raised platform. It was night and it started to rain, so the bathrizi, who was about the age of Shama here (appx. 15 years), said, "Come, let us go into the house to sleep or we will get soaked."

In they went and fell asleep (i.e. on the floor). In the night a Krite bit the kaka on the shoulder, and would not let go. The kaka grabbed it and pulled it away with his brute strength. (Mama demonstrated the nature of the struggle.) He threw it out of the house.

The bathrizi had run off in fright and raised the neighbours. They came quickly and, although they had a lamp, they could not find the snake. So they took the kaka and brought in the jadhuwara. Several jadhuwara tried to draw out the "snake" (poison) but they could not do it. Eventually the kaka died, and he was buried.

Then, always at night, the villagers were disturbed continuously by things being thrown, and noises they could not explain. So they called in a bhopa, who bound up the bhut. They were not bothered after that.

JNY - How did he bind it up?

MAMA SAHADEVA - Oh, he went to the graveyard and drove nails into the ground around the grave. [26/8/81]

During the hot season limes were popular as they could be used to make limeade. One day Baya, Mama Sahadeva's daughter, expressed a wish to go and get a lime from the tree behind Viro Paji's house.



DADI ZATU - Do not go, Baya! Especially not now in the midday sun. Do you not know what happened to Kanu (s/o Huro Paji)?

(I asked her to explain.) It was when Gomi's son, Babu, was just a baby. We had to get straw for our cow, and Kanu said he would go. I warned him not to go in the heat, but he did not heed me and off he went. The straw was beyond Viro's house and, as Kanu passed the Mango tree, he saw a windfall and picked it up. By the time he got back to the house he was shivering with fear. He sat down and covered himself with a quilt. Then he began to cry, "Nani, look at that woman! She is wandering around the houses, Nani. She has an iron spike in her hand and is hurting the animals."

The next day Kanu's condition was unchanged. The bhut was inside him, you see. He said that the woman kept creeping up and hitting him with the flat of her hand so as to frighten him. And he kept starting, as if he had been struck. Eventually Ramshi (Varesa), who was still a practising bhopa at that time, was called in, and he drove out the bhut. He drew a circle in the ground (with a knife) and placed the knife in the middle, but it jumped several feet away. I saw this happen. Then, finally, he placed a piece of white shroud in a bottle under the mango tree. Kanu was still afflicted the next day, but he was all right by the following day.

The bhut was that of a Sindi woman. It wore a Sindi woman's clothes. Ramshi himself saw her once when he went round the back of the houses to urinate. He said that he had thought it was just a village woman washing her hair. But he did not see her again.

JNY - Who was she?

DADI ZATU - I do not know. She has been here since the time when this land was owned by the Vaniya, since before this village was built. Who knows who lived here before then? [31/7/81]

Ramshi himself was to give me a bhopa's version of what had happened.

RAMSHI VARESA - Once Huro's son, Kanu, was possessed by a bhut. Huro came along to get me, for I used to be a bhopa and had some ilim. But I said that I could do little, being unskilled in such matters. Huro pressed me, however, and eventually I went with him. All the village had gathered, and there was Kanu.

I said to him, "Who is troubling you?"

He pointed, saying, "There she is! The woman is looking at me."

I took the grain, performed my ilim, and threw it at him. Then I asked him if she was still there.

"Yes. She is still standing there", he replied.

So. I performed my ilim again, and threw the grain at him again. But he claimed that she was still there. So I did it a third time, and this time he answered, "No! She is going away

in the direction of Rano (Akhiyani)'s fields (i.e. to the west of the village). So I bound threads on him (see 4.4,III) and he was cured. [7/1/82]

Mama Sahadeva, on his return once from near Nawabshah with Mali (d/o Lakshman Adi'hra) had this tale to tell.

MAMA SAHADEVA - While she was near Nawabshah (at the home of her husband), a bhut arose in Mali. A bhopa had to be brought in to drive it out.

She had been all right in the evening. She had cooked the meal, washed the dishes, and gone to sleep. Her husband was out watching the irrigation channel, as it was his turn for water. Then, as Mali slept, fever came. She dreamt that she was being chased by a buffalo. By morning she was very ill and, although her husband took her three or four times to the doctor for injections, it was no use.

MALI - I dreamt of the buffalo, and I was very scared.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Her husband would have fetched us, but he did not wish for her to be on her own and there was no-one else to send. Eventually he went to the bhopa. This was a great bhopa who lives in that village. The bhopa consulted his beads, and asked them to bring a black rooster.

MALI - They were black beads. He said that in the morning he would take the black rooster, circle it over my head, and release it into the wild. The bhut, he said, would enter the rooster and go off in it. The black rooster was bought, but it died in the night of its own accord.

MAMA SAHADEVA - Yes, he said that he would circle it over her head in the morning, but it died in the night of its own accord. The bhopa then said that the bhut was gone.

He has a very big temple, very nice inside, the size of a small house. Inside he has two or three effigies. Some are wood, some are iron.

MALI - We gave him two coconuts, and one and a quarter rupees worth of sweets for his offering. [8/5/82]

Just as occasionally doctors are unsuccessful, so it is with bhopa.

BIZAL (b/o Mama Sahadeva) - The girl who died a few months ago was a perfect woman. She cooked lovely food, and was always ready to offer hospitality. It was a real pity that she died, and everyone misses her.

She died in the eleventh year of her illness. No-one knows yet what killed her. Sometimes she said that it was her hand that hurt, sometimes her head, sometimes her foot. Slowly she went blind, and when she died blood came from her nose and out of her very skin. It was a terrible illness.

Her husband, who is my bathrizo's Haro (BSWB), spent a lot of money trying to cure her. Four ravar were called in. (A ravar is a bhopa with "devil" drum. Pocock - 1973:48 - notes that in Gujarat the Raval is a drumming caste, members of which often are the accomplices of the goddess mediums.) One was from the Vadiyara (Koli) caste. He spent four or five months in the village and shook every night, but to no avail.

One day he drew a circle and sat the girl inside it. Then he took off his kara and placed it in front of her - a kara is the brass bracelet which all bhopa wear. It has jadhu bound into it, and protects the bhopa from malignant bhut and dzinn.

The girl grew angry, however. Picking up the kara she threw it at his head. It missed his head, but struck his chest, and he ran off. He then told her husband to bring her to the temple of his Mata (mother/goddess), Karkiya Mata, which is in Tando Mohammed Khan.

Six or seven people accompanied her, and there the ravar shook a great deal. But all she said was, "What is this?", and "Who are you anyway?" And she got up and walked out. The ravar then admitted that whatever had possessed her was too strong for him.

Another ravar was brought in and shook much, but it was no use. Then he grabbed her by the hair, and demanded who it was who was possessing her. But all this did was to make her angry. She ran away and spent the rest of the night in the fields.

Another bhopa, from the Bajaniya caste, also tried. They all went to the grave of some Pir or Sevyid, and offered a goat in sacrifice. Then he shook all night. Everyone hoped that she would shake too, but she just sat there quietly.

She died eventually. In all her years of illness we never found out what it was that was wrong with her. Some said dev; some said this; some said that.

DADI ZATI - How could it have been the dev? Was she not a daughter (of the zach)? Her dev could have taken control of her, but no more. No, this must have been something else. [6/11/81]

In the instances of misfortune brought about by possession which have been highlighted in this section, there has been the occasional mention of dev or mata possession. In the above instance, Dadi Zati makes a generally accepted point when she says that, where dev/mata may possess those of their zach they do so only to communicate either their will, or their power. This is the form of possession in which the bhopa specialises, and the bhopa/dev relationship will be examined in the next Chapter.

#### SECTION 4.6: CONCLUSIONS

Where misfortune occurs, be it accident, madness, or general illness, it is diagnosed by a process of elimination. This is especially true in the case of illness, which may have many possible causes. If illness strikes, and a change of diet, or a visit to the doctor, or herbal remedies are ineffective, then possession may be suspected. It is then the job of the bhopa to trace the cause - be it something that has been eaten, a place that has been passed through, or someone who is dead but unsatisfied - and prescribe a remedy.

We began this chapter by studying the Kori concept of life. The ziv was seen to be the life force and was housed in the body. We found, however, that the Kori claimed no extensive knowledge of the internal workings of the body. There was conjecture when it came to diagnosing illness, but this was never fully relied upon. In contrast to their vagueness about the body, the ziv was perceived as having the physical form of breath. Life existed if breath was present and death resulted from its absence. This was stark reality.

The physical well-being of an individual depended upon the maintenance of a state of bodily balance, a balance which could be upset by, for example, eating the wrong foods at the wrong time, or, at the other extreme, being possessed by a force with a will of its own. When illness or misfortune occurred the imbalance had to be redressed. Knowledge was required for this, and usually necessitated the involvement of a specialist.

The range of specialists available varied. Those with practical skills, such as the bone setter, could be contrasted with those who possessed the knowledge of jadhu and the power of the dev, such as the bhopa. Whether it was practical skill or ilim which was turned to, these forms of knowledge had been passed on from teacher to pupil from generation to generation.

At the level of diet, apart from that of pure/impure which effected social relations rather than personal health, we found two major oppositions in the classifications of foodstuffs. The hot/cold opposition, which related directly to the restoration of bodily imbalance which had caused illness, was distinct from the strong/weak opposition, which related directly to increasing or decreasing virility.



The threat to the individual's well-being from others was then studied, and, whether misfortune was caused by an animal or by the enmity of a fellow human, a common factor was the manner in which the agent of misfortune was perceived. The scorpion's poison, the curse, the evil eye, the oath, the mut which continued to operate long after its author had died, were all seen as agents in their own right which operated independent of their source. The extreme case in this conceptual framework was the bhut. This had a life force of its own which, by inhabiting the body of the living, challenged the position of the ziv. This in turn caused bodily instability which effected both mental and physical well-being. Such was the case with Babu Paji who, due to being severely winded, had temporarily lost his ziv, and this had allowed a bhut to enter him and to trouble him.

It is worth commenting here on the absence of any substantial mechanism of "supernatural" control over farming fortunes. Farming, depending, as it does, on the irrigation canals and the regular seasons, is an area over which the Kori have far more direct control than personal health. They, therefore, have less need to look for specialist aid in this area of life.

What is striking about our study of the Kori's struggle for well-being has been the absence of the bhagat. Nevertheless, we have noted in this chapter, and in 3.3 and 3.4, certain similarities in the way the affairs of the bhagat and those of the bhopa, the supreme jadhuwara, are ordered.

The jadhu of the bhopa is secret ilim, the means of access to power, and is guarded jealously. The sabath of the bhagat, and the secret formulae used in worship are also guarded closely. The bhopa learns his jadhu from his teacher, while the bhagat learns his sabath from his guru. Both take on the role of selo to acquire ilim. Both are initiated into their relationship with their teacher. While the bhopa must observe certain vidi to ensure the success of his jadhu, the bhagat must also observe certain rules of conduct, involving abstinence from meat, tobacco, alcohol, etc., and certain physical exercises such as fasting, reciting liturgy, etc..

With this last example, however, the parallel ends, for, while the bhagat observes his rules so as to improve his character and enhance his spirituality, the bhopa observes his vidi so as to increase his earthly



power. The concern of the bhopa is with the present, whereas that of the bhagat is for the future.

This is not an isolated opposition. The bhopa uses his knowledge to harness the power of the dev. Ilim allows him to make his body accessible to the dev who possesses it with its own being. One interesting situation which arises from this is when, in order to diagnose the cure for bhut possession, the bhopa must also be possessed, but by the dev. In contrast, the bhagat uses his knowledge to improve his relationship with Ishvar. He empties himself, as it were, and concentrates his energies upon another (although, paradoxically, the guru is himself worshipped as Ishvar's representative - see 3.3).

A further opposition arose when we studied those who cured snake-bite. We found that the lower the caste of the jadhuwara, the greater was the power attributed to them. This opposition is reflected in the general antithesis between the bhopa, the master of jadhu, and the bhagat, whose absence from this functional arena has already been remarked upon. The bhagat, being a vegetarian and having ascetic ideals, is seen to embody high caste values, whereas the bhopa, with his earthly goals, engages in low caste practices. This bhagat/bhopa opposition will be extended further in the next Chapter to include its association with pap and dharam, and with the group and the individual.

We have seen how the kori retain some measure of control over their well-being, albeit having to rely on the skill or knowledge of a specialist. We have briefly focussed on the bhopa as one such specialist. In the chapter that follows we shall look more thoroughly at the goddess, and at her medium, the bhopa, who is often considered to be the last line of defence against the evils of the present life.

## CHAPTER 5: THE GODDESS

This chapter will study the relationship between the Kori and their goddesses. This relationship, rivalling that between the guru and the selo in the Bhakti movement, is reinforced by its roots in the traditions which are a part of the Kori identity - the festivals of No Northa and Parwa. While the bhagat is concerned with the future well-being of the ziv of the individual, the goddess can have power over his or her present well-being, and the well-being of the group to whom he or she belongs.

First, however, let us define some of the terms used. In the language of the Kori the term "mata" is used to refer to "goddess"; the same term being used to refer to one's mother. "mata" is distinct from "vau" (wife), used to refer to women who have married into the zach. The terms "dev (god) and devi (goddess) are also used, but when specific goddesses are referred to then "mata" is the more common term. The goddess of one's zach, unless considered to be male, which is rare, is always spoken of as the "mata". In this section we shall use "mata" to refer to goddesses, and "dev" to refer to the gods (i.e. both gods and goddesses in general). This practice, which corresponds to that of the Kori, will hopefully prevent too much confusion.

The concepts of dev and mata should not be confused with the "western" concept of the idol. The extent to which Kori shrines, madh, contain images or representations of dev varies according to the size of the village or the material support given by the villagers. Some madh, such as that of Zavo Bhopa at the Mayani village, contain actual effigies. Others consist of trunks containing the artifacts of worship. Others still are no more than these artifacts tied up in a plastic bag and hung on a tree or a post. To have an effigy of a mata is to do her great honour, but it is not to trap her within the physical bounds of its form. The effigy is merely her representation, it is not the mata herself.

JNY - Who is that mata over there? (I indicated the madh of the Akhiyani of Sirah village, which consisted of a couple of tin trunks raised on a platform of plastered mud beneath a bavar tree, and surrounded by a low mud wall.)

HADHU VEAN - What, that mata (he pointed)? Actually, that madh is empty at the moment. The mata is elsewhere. You see, mata are as the wind. They wander about. At this moment that particular mata might be away in India, or anywhere really. She

will definitely return for the festival of No Northa, however.

JNY - Does this mean that, if one were to make an offering at her madh just now, it would be wasted?

HADHU - By no means! Do you see how long it takes for me to blink my eyes? (he blinked.) That is how long it can take for a mata to come and go. So if an offering is made she can be here to receive it, then be off again just as quickly. [11/8/81]

Dasrath summed it all up once when I asked him whether dev lived in madh.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - No. Some dev are so great that it would be difficult for them to do so. Just as you have temple in which you worship, (here he was referring to the Christian practice of worshipping in a church building), and Ishvar does not live in this temple, so it is with dev and madh. Madh are where we worship, and where offerings are made. [6/5/82]

We would argue here that Sharma's comparison between Brahman priests and deities (1978b:71 - see also 2.2), where she sees the latter as the passive recipients of offerings and therefore more prone to being polluted does not hold for the Kori. If there is a danger of her pollution, the mata merely ignores the offering to her effigy.

This does not necessarily mean that shrines and idols are without power and in no need of respect. They might not be the mata herself, but she can reside within them.

## SECTION 5.1: SITLA MATA - THE BRINGER OF SMALLPOX

### I. Measles and Smallpox

Later we will return to look at the mata connected with specific Kori zach. First, however, we will look at one who is venerated by all Kori: Sitla, the mata who brings smallpox. The goodwill of Sitla Mata is sought annually at the festival of Hachmo (Seventh Day). It is also sought if there is an outbreak of measles, which there was during the time of our fieldwork.

Conversations about the measles epidemic, which swept the whole of lower Sind in early 1981, inevitably turned to the theme of smallpox, which was referred to simply as (The) "Mata".

We visited Lakshman Adi'hra's house where children still had measles. We were told that it lasted only for a few days, and consisted of a fever which culminated in the appearance of spots. There were, however, worse types of measles which lasted from four to six weeks. By the time Babu, Lakshman's youngest son, had caught them, measles had been in almost every household in the village. Those who could afford it took their children for injections, although this seemed to do little to speed their recovery when it was compared to the children of those who could not afford this.

[26/2/81]

We sat in on some speculation about the nature of measles. It was recognised that measles could spread from others. If a child caught it then everyone was in danger. The current epidemic was known to have started when Ramshi, whilst examining Chali's child who had a fever, declared that the turn of measles had come.

The big danger, however, used to be Mata (smallpox). Haku, Arjan's daughter, for example, was one who had suffered. (Haku's face bore the scars of smallpox.) Even when people survived The Mata she would often leave them blind or scarred.

[18/2/81]

Baya, Mama Sahadeva's daughter was one of the children who caught measles at that time. A clay figurine was moulded into the front wall of her family's home. Several months later I had the opportunity to enquire about it.

MAMA SAHADEVA - That is the idol of Sitla. We made it because of the measles Baya was suffering from. We do the same when The Mata comes. The Mata and measles come together. Measles are only dangerous for two and a half days, but The Mata is very dangerous.

NANI - Yes, you can cure measles with an injection, or even by eating river salmon - in which case it leaves immediately. But The Mata is different. When The Mata comes you must wait. And on the ninth day everyone must go and bathe. Then they come back and make an offering to Sitla. This offering is of flour, ghi, and sugar, in a saucer. It is then shared among everyone.

When Mama Sahadeva was young The Mata entered him. Because of this his back is now crooked. I had two large pots of rice and wheat pudding cooked and fed everyone. Otherwise he would not have lived. Those who have survived the Mata often still suffer. Some have lost their sight. Others have gone mad. Some have lost control of their tongue and dribble.

The Mata used to come every second year. Now she has been bound and cannot come any more.

MAMA SAHADEVA - The government forced her to be bound. They used injections and issued a writ.

JNY - What do you mean by a "writ"

NANI - A "writ" is where the government had it recorded that Sitla Mata was causing all this misery, and then presented their case to Ishvar. Ishvar then banned her, and she comes no more.

JNY - Who did this?

NANI - The whites who used to rule here. They had such strength. Now they have all left and run away to India.  
[20/8/81]

It was generally accepted by the Kori that smallpox no longer constituted a real danger to their well-being, and the above is an example of how this was explained by some. The ravages of Sitla Mata, nevertheless, remained strongly embedded in memories, Haku, a girl of eleven years, being the youngest villager to have suffered from the disease. Despite the absence of smallpox, however, the annual rites of Hachmo were continued, bearing, as we shall see, a close resemblance to the rite described by Nani above. We could reasonably assume that, coupled with the general popularity of traditional festivals, this was because of the deep-rooted fear of the smallpox goddess, and an insecurity as to whether her absence was to be permanent or temporary.

## II. Hachmo Remembered

Hachmo occurs in the rain season. As the humidity increases and the temperature drops slightly, life is made unpleasant by the sudden lack of a breeze, and the increase in flies and the other insects which seem to flourish. Rain may or may not come. Nothing is certain. Malaria is widespread and epidemics roam the countryside. And there is the coming of Hachmo. The old ladies say that all the flies come to feast at Hachmo.

JNY - What happens at Hachmo?

HADHU VEAN - At Hachmo we eat sweet things. That is why we have it, just as the Sindhi have Eid to eat sweet things.

JNY - I have heard that you must not cook things.



HADHU - That is true. All the cooking must be done the day before. Then, the next day, you eat everything cold. On that day the house is re-plastered, and we all bathe and wash our clothes, or at least the women do. We men are only really involved in the eating.

But yes, you cannot light a fire inside the house. If you wish to make tea, you must make it on an outside hearth.

JNY - Why is this?

HADHU - Oh, to give the hearth a rest. After three days (i.e. the Ninth Day) you can use it again. [11/8/81]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - It is only the women who go out to bathe. They take wheat pudding, or tablet with them and leave it in the water channel. They say that they are feeding the water channel, and the children run to see if they can find anything left afterwards. [11/8/81]

CHALI (w/o Rano Akhiyani) - What happens is this. Having done all the cooking the day before, the women get up early and have tea. Then they take the shard of an old pot and put some white cloth over it, as they do to the bride. Then they take it with them and go out to bathe in the water channel. They say it is Sitla Mata. They bathe it along with themselves. Then, putting some water in a brass drinking vessel (lota), they place Sitla in this and bring her back to their houses. There they place Sitla against a wall, or at the place where the water pots stand, and offer a saucer of flour mixed with sugar and ghi to her. This mixture is called kular. They take three pinches of kular and place it in front of Sitla. Then they call for the children to come and share in it. [12/8/81]

Buro Bhopa came round the village calling, "Come and get Hachmo! Bharat is calling everyone to come and get Hachmo." I went over to Arjan's to ask what it was all about.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - Bharat does this every year. If there is anyone who cannot afford to buy in their supplies for Hachmo he says he is willing to lend them the money they need.

JNY - Is this common practice?

ARJAN - Some villages do it. They ask their landlords for loans.

JNY - Why is Sitla worshipped? (Again, no-one seemed to know. Eventually Dadi Zatu was asked.)

DADI ZATU - It is because Sitla sends the smallpox. We bathe her and offer her kular so that she will subdue the smallpox. Then it will strike our children less.

ARJAN - But there is no smallpox now anyway. [19/8/81]

### III. Hachmo Witnessed

What follows is an account of the Hachmo rites as they were witnessed first hand.

The women of the village rose early in the morning, swept, and made tea for their household. They then each took a brass bowl of the mixture for washing their hair, and a lota with a shard of pottery, and went out to bathe. They all seemed to go out together, Lavi's wife, Ratani, coming round the village to summon them, although I noticed that some went early while others were late.

At the bank of the water channel they sat fully clothed and washed their hair. They then combed it out and, having thrown their sweet rotlo into the water, they themselves bathed, tossing out the rotlo to the dogs as acts of dharam. The rotlo were dropped into the water by each woman as they came out of the village. Some chanted as they did so. Jari launched herself into the water and swam about. She then bowed her head to the water itself and murmured "Ram-e-ram" in greeting. Old clothes were worn for bathing in.

Jari meditated for some time on the bank. She then bathed her own Sitla, washed her lota, and filled it with water. White cloth was placed over her Sitla while she said aloud, "Today, Sitla, you are given new clothes." She then did the same for some other women, being the expert. The women then returned in a group to the village, each later going to their separate homes.

I joined my wife and Jari at the latter's house, and watched as she placed Sitla on the wall in her uthak where the waterpots usually stood. The Sitla was leaned against a pillar facing east. She was then offered a plate of rice, yoghurt, tablet, sweet rotlo, and kular. Jari took her lota and tossed its water to both sides of the low wall. Then clasping her hands together, she bowed to Sitla. The offerings were then distributed to all who were there. Only then did Jari change out of her dripping clothes.

Dogs were being fed. Jari organised plates of sweet rotlo to be taken with a yard of new blouse material to each of Lakshman Bhagat's neyani (women of his zach) who were residing in the village at that time. [21/8/81]

DADI ZATU - All the women go to bathe, all the wives, that is. Girls do not go, although children can. Widows only go for one or two years after the death of their husband. It is all done for the children, you see. Once the children have shared in the offered kular once or twice, then, if The Mata comes to them, the harm will not be severe.

On the next "good" day following Hachmo, in the evening, the women will take their Sitla out to the water channel. This water comes from the river, you see. There they will take fresh dung and make a circle on the dry bed of the channel. Inside this they will place wheat grains and place Sitla on top of them. Then they will greet her by throwing grain and cracking

their knuckles. And that will be the end of Hachmo for another year. [21/8/81]

#### IV. Summary

It is interesting to contrast the mens' views of Hachmo with those of the women. Men participate only in the food side of the Hachmo ritual, and are concerned mainly about the length of time which must pass before the domestic cooking arrangements are restored to normal. Women are concerned with the rites themselves, for this is their sphere of action. Hachmo, to them, is not a matter of good food, but mainly of preventing smallpox, and also of ensuring that this is done in the correct manner.

A more detailed study of the Kori Hachmo rites can be found in the work of C.S.L.Young (1985). It would, however, be worth our while pulling some strands together. There is the immediate parallel between the nine day rites of Hachmo and the nine day rites described above (I), which were performed to cure smallpox in the past.

The ritual begins with a purification of the home through its re-plastering in preparation for the coming presence of Sitla. The purification of the participant women through their bathing follows, accompanied by acts of dharam, and only then are offerings made to Sitla herself.

Acts of dharam accompany the ritual throughout - Bharat offers money to those who have none, children are given offerings to share in, zach daughters are given food and new cloth. There is also, however, a degree of protection involved in this giving. The food Bharat lends money for is necessary for the offering and for the feeding of the children and zach daughters, all of whom are thus protected against smallpox.

There is a further aspect of the Hachmo ritual which is worth mentioning. The women proceed to the water channel which comes from the river. Water is bathed in, worshipped, offered sweet rotlo, and brought back to be used in the worship of Sitla. Sitla, herself, is made from the shard of a water pot, is worshipped where the water pots are

normally kept, and is returned to the water channel when the rituals have been completed.

We might suggest a link between water itself, and the need to isolate and control the Smallpox Goddess when she manifests herself to receive the womens' worship and offerings. Disease pollutes, but water washes clean. Sitla Mata is also propitiated as the smallpox goddess by the Patidar ("Sitala" - Pocock 1973:51), the Bhils (Sitla - Doshi 1971), and in Shanti Nagar ("Sili Sat" - Freed & Freed 1980:349). Pocock and the Freeds comment that her name means "cool".

In 6.3 we will briefly examine the festival of Hutani, when fire is taken from the cooking hearths, worshipped outside the village, and then returned to the hearths for domestic use. At Hachmo water is utilised to allow Sitla to become manifest without danger to the villagers. Water is then returned in the lota to the home, and cooking can begin again.

## SECTION 5.2: THE ZACH MATA

Sitla Mata has been seen as the source of misfortune and suffering. She is a mata in constant need of appeasement. Although her power is seen to have diminished, memories of her remain. There are, however, other, more benign mata, who, although not so widely venerated, continue to loom large in the lives of individual Kori. These are the Zach Mata, the goddesses of the patrilineage.

### I. The Kori and Their Zach Mata

Following one instance of Babu Paji being possessed, it was rumoured that Zavo, his father, was intending to take him to see his mata. I asked Lakshman Adi'hra what this meant.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Zavo's brother keeps their madh at his house. Every family keeps a dev. In fact, every zach has certain dev which it honours. We Adi'hra have Bessarazi. He is a male dev

and is said to ride on a rooster.

JNY - Whose madh is this out front? (I indicated the Akhiyani shrine.)

LAKSHMAN - That is Savan. (I later discovered that this was incorrect.) There are others also. They are the mata of the Akhiyani. They sacrifice a goat to them if they ever have a son born. We Adih'ra do not do this for Bessarazi. What is done varies depending on the dev involved. The zach of my wife keeps Khetarpar and sacrifices a goat to her every year at Divali.

ZAKAL (w/o Lakshman Adih'ra) - Yes, you should see the madh of my parents. People in this village do not seem to bother with the upkeep of their madh, but my parents keep their madh beautifully. It is Khetarpar's. And they keep a lamp burning there day and night throughout the year. [30/8/81]

Let us hear more about zach mata.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - Different zach do not necessarily keep different dev. There are as many as thirty-three crore (33,000,000) dev. People follow the dev of their town of origin. Thus, different zach can worship the same dev. [30/9/81]

SANDO ZANDARIYA - The Zandariya keep Khorivar and Khetarpar. Khorivar accepts pat, that is, virgin female goats, and Khetarpar accepts male sheep (i.e. offered in sacrifice). Khetarpar is worshipped by many zach, and with Khetarpar is always the black cobra. [28/5/82]

SHAVO BHOPA - Many other zach keep our mata (Savan and Shikothar). But they have their own separate madh. [7/10/81]

JNY - Can a man of another zach worship at your madh?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - No. Only those of the zach can worship the dev of that zach. [24/10/81]

This restriction extends to those who partake of that which is directly offered to the dev.

DADI ZATI - When an offering is burned, then three khan (small piles of the substances offered) are made. After the offering has been performed, these khan are given to the nevani (women of the zach) only. We women of other zach do not eat them. Then the sheh, (that part which has not been directly offered) is shared among the children. [2/10/81]



Zach and non-zach are precisely delineated, wives and mothers being excluded.

RANO MAYANI - Only the daughters of the zach can eat of this offering. None of the wives can, for they are of a different zach. [6/10/81]

This leads us to ask where the wife stands in relation to her own zach mata.

RATANI (w/o Lavi Dungarani) - When I was a girl I kept faith with Momai and Raz Bai (the mata of the Akhiyani zach) for I was an Akhiyani. But, when I was married, I was separated, and now I keep faith with the Dungarani mata. These are Shikothar, Savan, and Khetarpar. Shikothar and Savan have a trunk which they share, but khetarpar is separate. (Khetarpar's artifacts were tied up in a plastic bag.) [8/3/82]

DADI ZATI - If a woman marries an Adi'hra, she cannot eat chicken, for it is forbidden for her husband to do so (see below). But when an Adi'hra woman marries into another zach it does not matter for her anymore, for her children will not be Adi'hra, and she will have to teach them the customs of their own zach. [29/9/81]

## II. Some Examples of Zach Mata

Let us briefly look at some zach and their mata. The Akhiyani madh at Sirah was, as we have seen, located near Mothi's shop.

RADHU AKHIYANI - They are the mata of my family. We keep them. They are Momai and Raz Bai. [20/4/81]

JARI - Raz Bai is the more formidable of the two. She is like a dzinn. You know how dzinn fly around at night, and take ziv and run away, and we say "a dzinn rose in them". That is how it is with Raz Bai. By comparison, Momai is a mata of dharam. She is never dangerous as Raz Bai is. [8/5/82]

ZAVO PAJI - We Paji follow two mata: Shikothar and Khoriyar. Their madh is located beyond Tando Sumaro. Once a year word comes round, and all Paji have to gather there to worship and make offerings which contribute to the upkeep of the madh. When word comes to us then we have to go there.

The Parkari (Koli) worship there also. In fact the madh keeper is himself a Parkari. [29/9/81]

Zavo here illustrates the fact that worship of dev is something which different Hindu castes have in common, and which they often also do in common.

MANZI BHAGAYO - My zach puts faith in three mata. The first is Momai, and there is also Shikothar, and Khoriyar. Khoriyar accepts male goats; Momai accepts sweet offerings, be they of rice or porridge; Shokothar accepts savoury lentils with rice and ghi. [15/3/82]

BHAVA MAHALEYO - The mata of my zach are Savan and Shikothar. Shikothar accepts pat (virgin female goats), but Savan accepts only sweet offerings. We ourselves have no madh, but our zach madh is out beyond Tando Adam. [9/3/82]

MAMA SAHADEVA - My Zach is Hanthalpura, and our mata is Savan. In our madh we keep her picture. [31/8/81]

The most information gathered was of the mata of the Mayani zach.

BURO MAYANI - The Mayani keep Savan and Shikothar. Shikothar is a mata with two arms. Savan is the most powerful of all the dev. She is greater than Shikothar. Savan has four arms, and many people worship her.

JNY - Are there any special rites which your zach perform, for I have heard that each zach has its own particular dev?

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes, for there are many dev to be worshipped. Are there not thirty-three crore dev? But we have no special rites to perform.

BURO - Shikothar demands chickens. She also accepts goats. She is not a vegetarian, whereas Savan is.

SHAVO BHOPA - Savan demands goats too. What she demands depends upon the occasion. [1/9/81]

SHAVO BHOPA - Shikothar is a mata from Sind. She did not exist in the previous age. Nor was she to be found in Kutch. When our people first came to Sind they began to worship her, and when they returned to Kutch they took her with them. But she herself is of Sind. [3/3/82]

(Solanki - 1976:63 - notes that Hinglaj Mata, who is worshipped by the Koli of Southern Gujarat, was also reputed to have been brought by them

from Sind.)

BIURO MAYANI - Savan is the greatest of all the dev. Once she saved them from the clutches of Mekaharo. Mekaharo was a human with much ilim. With this ilim Mekaharo grew his moustaches very long, and then he used them to ensnare all thirty-three crore dev, all, that is, with the exception of Savan.

He tied up the dev in a bundle, as you would tie up a bundle of sticks. They were helpless. Meanwhile, Savan lay sleeping. She had wished to sleep for six months, and so had left instructions that no one wake her.

When they saw all thirty-three crore dev lying tied up and helpless apart from Savan, the humans did not know what to do. Five pandit got together to decide what could be done. "Savan can save us," they said, "but who can wake her? She will fly into a rage and, with one puff of her breath, kill whoever disturbs her."

Eventually a plan was devised. The five pandit scraped a mixture of dirt and sweat from their skins, and from this made a bumble bee. They then sent this bee off with instructions to inform Savan of their plight. It buzzed into her ear, and she awoke only to find a bumble bee.

The bee told her of all that had happened. She immediately took up her trident and stabbed Mekaharo in the neck with it. "Who are you, a mere human, to think that you are greater than the dev?" she cried. Mekaharo was killed and the dev set free. [6/10/81]

The relationships between zach and mata can be summarised as follows.

#### DEV - ZACH

Momai - Akhiyani, Bhagayo  
Raz Bai - Akhiyani  
Savan - Mayani, Hanthalpura, Mahaleyo, Shekhani, Dungarani  
Shikothar - Mayani, Bhagayo, Mahaliyo, Paji, Lakhaniya, Dungarani  
Khetarpar - Zandariya, Bhagayo, Shekhani, Lakhaniya, Dungarani  
Khoriyar - Zandariya, Paji  
Surel - Ladhani  
Bessarazi - Adi'hra, Agisani  
Karkiya - Paji

Several points are worthy of note. Despite the often repeated phrase that there are thirty-three crore dev to be worshipped, between the dozen or so zach studied (averaging two dev per zach) the names of only seven dev were encountered. Sharma (1978b:61) finds a similar situation in

Kangra. A second point worth raising is that, whereas Kori men can speak at great length about the mata of their own zach, they become vague and general when talking of the mata of others, or even the rites whereby the same mata are worshipped by other zach. (It is also interesting to note that in Gujarat Pocock - 1973:54 - finds that only Brahman and royal Rajputs have lineage goddesses. In contrast, clan goddesses were found to exist among the Bhils studied by Doshi - 1971) It should also be mentioned that dev do not seem to receive the whole-hearted support of all Kori. Dasrath Shekhani, for example, indicated that his recognition of dev left him some room for cynicism.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - The Shekhani put their faith in Khetarpar and Savan. The put their faith only in Savan at first, but Khetarpar is the partner of Savan and so must be worshipped also. But this is stuff only for the old women. I know that one has only to follow Ishvar. [30/9/81]

### III. The Madh

Although individual zach tend to have one main madh where they gather together, it is also convenient to have a more local madh, where this is possible, so as to have easy access to the mata on a more day to day basis.

DADI ZATI - Dev are never kept inside houses. A man must first obtain permission from the keeper of the main madh before he can build his own madh. If permission is not given he must continue to go to the main madh, no matter the inconvenience involved. [29/8/81]

The contents of madh vary greatly.

MANZI BHAGAYO - I made our zach madh myself. It was a large hut, and inside were pictures of the dev. At the No Northa festival I decorated it with coconut, and with a sanduwara - a tapestry with pictures of all the dev, and with a canopy. [15/3/82]

The madh artifacts belong to the mata and are the responsibility of the shrine keeper, the bhopa.

SHAVO BHOPA - The madh artifacts used to be kept by my brother in his village. He allowed me to take over, and so I brought them to our village. They belong to the dev, and must remain within the madh. [6/10/81]

In the case of the Mayani madh, the artifacts consisted of two metal trunks – one for each mata, two raised griddles upon which offerings were burned, two sets of tongs to handle the coals of the offering fire, two iron tridents, a heavy iron chain, a clay image of Savan, and a picture of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

BHOPI ZATI - In the past we used to possess a wooden Savan which had eyes, and other features. But in the time of our elders they grew angry and took her away to our homeland (Kutch). Now all that we have are the tridents and other instruments. [3/3/82]

The main madh of the Akhiyani zach seems to have suffered a similar fate, but to a greater degree.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - We Akhiyani used to have a big madh with a bhopa. But the bhopa took it and went to our homeland. Now we only keep a small one, and there is no bhopa. Otherwise you would have been able to witness our customs properly. [30/9/81]

The state of the Akhiyani madh earned the general disapproval of the villagers who could remember better days.

NANI - The madh used to be well kept by the old patel. Now Radhu keeps it, and you can see the state it is in. Mothi used to keep it nice, sweeping it out and keeping it clean. But once, while he was doing this, a scorpion bit him on the hand. Now he leaves it alone. [1/5/81]

We have already seen (2.2) how impurity caused by a birth forced the postponement of <sup>the</sup> ceremony, whereby Ramshi's son's hair-lock was to be offered to the zach mata. Dev are sensitive to impurity, and pains have to be taken to ensure that madh are worthy of their presence. In the case of a birth, for example, the houses of the hamlet must be sprinkled with water.

DADI ZATI - Those who honour the dev do this. If they do not sprinkle pure water on their houses then, when they offer at their madh, their offering will not be honoured, and they will have to repeat it again after water has been sprinkled. This is because of the impurity caused by the birth. [8/3/82]

HUZO AKHIYANI - When a woman gives birth then the house is abaral and no offering can be made to the mata. She must first wash her clothes. Then the tail of a cow is dipped in a lota (brass vessel) of water, which is then sprinkled on the houses. This brings release. [6/3/82]



#### IV. The Bhopa

Before major ceremonies, madh are swept, plastered, and redecorated, and, as we have seen from the example of the Akhiyani madh in Sirah, they need keepers if they are to function effectively. Smaller ones, such as those of the Akhiyani and Dungarani of Sirah, are maintained on a haphazard basis by the households which they "serve", larger madh which are used by a zach as a whole need more attention. The one who keeps the madh must, in doing so, serve its mata, and so earns the title of "bhopa". Shavo Bhopa, for example, is the keeper of the Mayani madh (see Plate II.).

JNY - Will your son be a bhopa also?

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes, the madh must be kept in my line. My father kept it, and then my brother after him. Hadhu (his eldest son) will keep it after me, and then perhaps a younger son of mine.

JNY - What do you have to teach them?

SHAVO BHOPA - Nothing much. No great secrets. Only the correct ways for the rites to be performed. [6/10/81]

Not just any son can become a bhopa, however.

DADI ZATI - If the father is a bhopa then his son can become one after him, but only if his heart is true. If he is a bad person then he will not succeed to the power of the mata. Shavo's father was a bhopa. His wife is called "Bhopi" only because she is married to him. His mother was no bhopi. [3/10/81]

It is, however, possible for women to wield the power of dev.

DADI ZATI - Sona (Paji)'s wife is a bhopi. Her mother was one before her. If a father is a bhopa then his daughter does not become one. She can only become one if her mother was one before her. If it is the mother's will then the daughter can take the dev over from her. If not then it leaves them. [3/10/81]

Bhopa, as we mentioned in 3.3, must undergo initiation before they can fully serve dev.

SHAVO BHOPA - When a man wishes to have the power of a bhopa he must drink from the cup given him by his master. This is the pivala. If the dev is one who asks for the sacrifice of goats, then the pivala will contain the blood of a sacrificed goat. But, if the mata is Savan, who is vegetarian, then the pivala will contain milk from the madh cow. [7/10/81]

Without the dev which he serves, the bhopa has no power.

HADHU VEAN - If you wish to become a bhopa you must worship a mata. You must make offerings to her, and serve her, looking after her requirements. From her you will get your power. If you do not worship her and offer to her you will lose your power. [11/8/81]

The mata possesses the bhopa, using him as a medium through which to communicate.

RADHU AKHIYANI - The wind used to rise in my father. Then he would ask for a goat, or for two goats. Everybody would then do what my father said. [20/4/81]

The power attained through being possessed by a mata must be demonstrated by the bhopa. On one occasion Zavo spoke with admiration of the keeper of the Paji madh.

ZAVO PAJI - At the annual gathering he demonstrates his power. He heats an iron chain until it is red and then plunges it into oil. Then he dips his bare hands into the oil and is not burned. He whips himself with the chain and does not feel pain. Twice he sets alight a cloth dipped in oil on the end of a stick and, while it is still burning, puts it into his mouth. Such is his ilim. [29/9/81]

If they do not demonstrate powers such as these, at the very least, a self respecting bhopa is expected to dund. To dund is to tremble and shake to show possession.

Shavo Bhopa did not dund.

RATANI (w/o Buro Mayani) - The Bhopa does not dund. He says that he does not receive the command from the mata to do so.

My father used to dund. He would take the chain and whip himself so hard that he would be cut to the bone. It was a terrible sight, but he always said that he felt no pain. In the end, however, it made him very weak and unhealthy. [7/10/81]

Ratani's defensive loyalty to Shavo Bhopa, her husband's "brother", was not shared by other korj.

KARAM ADI'HRA - Did you not see a bhopa dund at No Northa? What about Shavo Bhopa?

JNY - Shavo did not dund. They say he has not received the command to do so.

KARAM - It matters not whose wish it is, he should dund at No

Northa at the very least. Did no-one dund here in Sirah?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - There are no proper madh here. A proper madh must have a bhopa. [14/2/82]

Shavo Bhopa, however, was not the only madh keeper to be so deprived by his mata.

JNY - Did you dund when you kept your madh?

MANZI BHAGAYO - No. My dada (FF) used to dund. I tried often, but the mata would not honour me. [15/3/82]

Sona Paji's wife, by comparison, would dund if ever her dev's honour was threatened. The following conversation followed an incident where, as a result of a quarrel with her husband, the wind rose in the Bhopi herself.

DADI ZATI - Sona was in a drunken rage and said to his wife, "Your mother's, and your mother's dev's!" (Inferring shame on their genitals.) When she heard this she was stricken with shame. The wind rose in her and she began to dund. She ran out into the fields and continued to dund all night. Sona was drunk and fell asleep. Then in the morning she came here to Sirah. [3/10/81]

Whether or not the bhopa can dund, the responsibility falls upon his household to maintain a good relationship with the mata on the zach's behalf. The bhopa must ensure that the madh is kept in good order, that the correct rites are performed when the occasion demands them, that the other zach members contribute to the upkeep of the madh, and the impurity is kept under control and no prohibitions are broken which might jeopardise relationships with the mata. In return the bhopa is the mata's representative before the zach, and the zach mata can be a powerful ally to the individual who is threading his way through the perils of life.

While the role of the bhopa among the Bhils studied by Doshi (1971) is similar to his role among the Kori, an interesting transformation takes place when we look further afield. Among the Dhodias of Southern Gujarat (Solanki 1976:192) and the Mahadev Kolis of Maharashtra (Ghurye 1963:48) it is the bhagat who is voice of the goddess, while among the Kori the bhagat is the very antithesis of the bhopa.

We have already seen some of the powers which the mata channels through her bhopa: powers to cure illness, to diagnose possession, or to bring about misfortune through the use of jadhu. The bhopa is thus a channel through which the mata can reward the faithfulness of the zach which worship her. Mata also bestow special knowledge upon their bhopa.

VIRO PAJI - They may dund at the Mayani village, but it will be nothing compared to our madh. There the bhopa will be able to tell you exactly what you have been eating, whether it has been milk, buttermilk, sweetmeats, vegetables, whatever. The madh bhopa can also say what you may be clutching in your hand if you present it to him. If it is gold he will say gold. If it is silver he will say silver. He is given the knowledge. [3/10/81]

DADI ZATI - She (Sando' wife) has the power to spot a thief. She is possessed, and then her dev tells her who the culprit is. Once her husband's loincloth was taken by another woman and sewed into a quilt. When it was missed she knew exactly where it was. In fact she found the quilt and unpicked the stitching to recover it. Once some anklets were taken, and she named the thief. I went to her when my money was stolen (see 3.2, 4.4), but she did not know enough to tell me that time. [3/10/81]

If bhopa are given forms of personal power such as those mentioned above, they must observe additional prohibitions to maintain them. Even so, as we saw in the case of Chandar Bhil's diagnosis and attempted cure of Babu Paji (4.5), the bhopa can have direct control only of those of his zach.

CHANDAR BHIL - What I want you to do is this. Bring the boy's bhopa here, or else go and see him. If he is willing to cure the boy then so be it. But if not, I will need his permission before I can act. The boy is within his control, and without his permission I am not free to do anything. [29/8/81]

## V. The Zach and the Mata

The bhopa's position with regard to the mata does not mean that others cannot approach the mata directly. This is often done in cases of minor misfortune or illness, or as a first step in the search for a cure. Direct approaches have been known to result in dramatic cures.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - Dev are not to be ignored. They have great power. Do you see my son there? He was once afflicted by an illness which took away the strength from his legs. He could not

even get up to go and urinate or defecate by himself. After trying many doctors I took him to see our bhopa at the madh. When we arrived there, the love which permeates the very place itself affected him, and, before the bhopa had even had time to examine his beads, my son found he was able to stand by holding onto a bed. Then, in the morning, the bhopa looked at his beads and said that two coconuts were to be offered. We left that day, and by the time we arrived home my son was walking without any assistance. Such is the power of dev. They can always be turned to, and their help is assured. [8/5/82]

To receive the help of a mata one has to make an offering, or the promise of an offering.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - I will tell you why the dev are worshipped. In the first days, when people suffered illness and misfortune, they turned to the dev, and offered them things in exchange for their help. Now they are held fast. They are afraid to leave the dev's protection, just as the Christians are afraid to leave the protection of Parbhu Isu. [1/5/82]

Exchange can be direct. We were once visiting the village of one Shamu Duda'hra when the smell of burning coconut seeped over a wall from the houses of the neighbouring hamlet.

RAMI (w/o Shamu Duda'hra) - It is the Adi'hra next door. They are offering coconuts to Bessarazi. A woman has a fever, and so they offer. Sometimes they also offer lentils and rice, and porridge too. [4/11/81]

Exchange can also be delayed. Huzo Akhiyani on one occasion had made an offering of some coconut to Momai. Several weeks later I mentioned this and asked what the reason behind it was.

DADI ZATI - That is because his boy had a fever. Huzo had promised the mata coconut if she made him well. [2/10/81]

I once asked whether the Adi'hra kept chickens at their madh, given that their mata, Bessarazi, honours chickens.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Kaka Karam's elder brother has the madh at his village. I do not think that they keep chickens there, although if a man's son has a fever he will promise Bessarazi a chicken if he is made well. The chicken is then donated to the madh and kept there. [6/10/81]

Promises can be long term. Buro Mayani's household took turns to provide Shavo Bhopa with the oil which was needed for the madh lamps which were burned each evening.

RATANI (w/o Buro Mayani) - We cannot really go to the hospital



for a checkup to see why it is that we cannot have children, for we have promised to remain true to Savan for one whole year so that she will give us some.

BURO MAYANI - Oh, but that promise was made over two years ago, and still there is nothing. [6/10/81]

A bargain struck with a mata can also take the form of an oath or a penance. Dadi Zati has already described how she used to suffer from fits (murgi), and had once been badly beaten up in an attempt to cure her. She had been brought home on an ox-cart, presumed to be dead (see 4.1,IV.)

DADI ZATI - There was a wedding at our village at the time, and as our cart arrived the children were shouting, "The groom is coming! The groom is coming!" That was the first thing I can remember hearing. It was only then that my breath returned and I began to live again.

The men wished to take my body and leave it in the graveyard so as not to ruin the wedding. But just then my zethani (HeB) saw my foot move. He realised that I might still be alive, and so he took his head-cloth and circled it over me four times, calling out to his dev, "I swear I will not put this headcloth back on my head until you make this woman well."

Slowly my health recovered. I have not suffered from fits since that time, although I still shake a bit. [4/6/82]

The mata are not to be trifled with. If the mata keeps her part of the bargain, then it is the ill-advised Kori who defaults on his/hers. All mata are not identical. Each is attributed with her own personality and desires.

SHAVO BHOPA - Different mata ask for offerings of different things. Mostly they ask for goats, but Bessarazi asks for chickens, and these are given to the madh. The Adi'hra, who worship Bessarazi, cannot eat chicken. [24/11/81]

The following is an illustration given of the meaning of the word "vidi". To keep an object "vidi" is to abstain from it (see also Pocock 1973:42).

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Vidi is like when you are ill and go to the doctor. The doctor gives you injections and pills to take, and then says that you are not to eat this, and not to eat this. Vidi is like that. You abstain from something and good comes of it. When we Adi'hra do not eat chicken we are following the vidi of Bessarazi. [24/11/81]

The association of Bessarazi with the chicken is not an arbitrary whim of this dev, or of the Kori.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - We Adi'hra keep Bessarazi. He is a male dev and is said to ride on a rooster. No Adi'hra can eat chicken

because of this. Kaka Karam will never touch chicken. If our relatives ever discovered that we ate chicken they would no longer eat with us or even come to our hamlet. They would say, "You are now a different coin, and we will have nothing to do with you." [30/8/81]

The worshippers of Momai have an association with the hand, the female camel.

MAMA SAHADEVA - My eldest brother keeps an idol of Momai and of Raz Bai. We do not follow any other dev or mata. Momai and Raz Bai ride on the hump of a hand. I have no picture, but you can obtain these in India. Their temple is also in India.

Because they ride the hand, we can never ride her ourselves. If one were to enter our fields we could not chase her off, nor could we attach a rope to her, or chain her up. We can, and do, drink her milk, however. Male camels do not matter. We can ride on them, or chase them off, or yoke them. Only hand matter. [25/9/81]

Other mata are associated with the cow.

ZAVO PAJI - A cow is kept at our temple. It is a special cow. When it is milked its dishes are kept separate, and no ghi or buttermilk can be made from its milk. Only the milk itself, or yoghurt, can be eaten. We Paji can eat the ghi or buttermilk of other cows, but not that of the madh cow. If we ever do such a thing we must offer a coconut at the madh before we can obtain forgiveness.

I do not know who the Mayani worship, but I do know that they, and the Zandariya, keep madh cows also. Whenever a madh cow is sold, a goat, or its equivalent, must be sacrificed to the dev in its honour. Rano (Akhiyani) has just bought a cow from the madh in the Mayani village. On, or after Divali he must now sacrifice a goat and feed the people there. [29/9/81]

Buro Mayani himself verified this.

JNY - Do you keep madh cows here?

BURO MAYANI - Yes, although there is only one at this moment. We keep it, but cannot make ghi or buttermilk from its milk. We can, however, drink its milk and eat its yoghurt. Viro (Paji) has just bought the other one from us for one thousand rupees.

JNY - Will he, then, have to sacrifice a goat?

BURO - Yes. He will give a goat at Divali. It will be sacrificed, and its blood offered. But to Shikothar, not to Savan. Savan is vegetarian, and will not accept a goat sacrifice. [6/10/81]

Another association between a dev and an animal was between Khetarpar and the black cobra.

SANDO ZANDARIYA - The Zandariya keep Khoriyar and Khetarpar. Khoriyar takes virgin female goats, and Khetarpar takes male sheep.

Khetarpar is worshipped by many zach, and with Khetarpar is always the black cobra. Those who worship Khetarpar cannot kill the black cobra. They say it is their dada (FF). Once I saw a black cobra and was about to kill it when another of my zach cried out, "No! No! That is my dada you are killing." [28/5/82]

The abstentions and prohibitions listed above are general rules to be kept by all members of the zach. Wives who have married into the zach often have additional prohibitions to observe.

PANSA AKHIYANI - When the mata forbids something, for example, in the way that Momai and Raz Bai forbid our wives to wear sunari (tie-dye shawls) we say that this is "the mata's ruling". And so our wives do not wear sunari. Not that anything would necessarily happen to them if they did, but people can recognise that they are Akhiyani. [7/5/82]

MALI (w/o Arjan Adi'hra) - In the old days everyone wore bone bangles, but now those that can afford it wear silver. Only those who are very poor wear bone, unless they are forbidden to wear silver by their mata. [24/9/81]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Manzi (Dungarani)'s banevi (ZH) used to live here, and his wife had to wear bone. She said, "Our dev will not let us wear silver. If we do we will fall ill." The banevi was of the Ladhani zach, but I do not know the name of the dev.

If this is the case then the wives must not wear silver bracelets, although they can wear silver earrings and necklets. But the daughters of that zach can and do wear silver bracelets, for they are married into another zach. [5/5/82]

Again, a direct link can be found between the prohibition and the mata herself.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - Wives of the Ladhani zach cannot wear sureli (silver wedding bracelets), because there are sureli in the madh of their zach dev. These are a part of the madh artifacts. Similarly, have you not noticed that the Akhiyani of your village do not allow their wives to wear sunari? This is because in their main madh, in the town of Sandaruwa, they have sunari as roof hangings. And so their womenfolk can only wear blockprinted or woven headshawls. In the canopy of this madh there are also silver bells, and so the men cannot wear silver bell buttons, as used to be the fashion. Nor can silver bells be tied around the necks or feet of their animals. [6/5/82]

It is not by the mata's design that women and men of certain zach are restricted from wearing things such as sunari and silver bells, but by the fashion which suggests to others that such things may be worn. It would be interesting to see how men would fare, however, if they were prohibited from wearing something as fundamental to manhood as silver wedding bracelets are to womanhood.

Wives, as a general rule, have to show respect to the mata of their husband. They avoid it in the ritual manner, as they would their husband's elder male kin.

S/O SHAVO BHOPA - It is dangerous for a wife of the zach to come near the madh. If she does, she must veil before it. She must not show her face to the mata.

S/O HAMIR MORANI - Anyone else may approach without fear. Only those who "avoid" must veil. If they wish to worship, they must do so from a distance. [19/10/81]

BHOPI ZATI - Only women born to the zach can enter the madh. If any wives come near, they must first veil themselves. Of the wives only I, the wife of the bhopa, can enter, and that is once a year at No Northa, when I must plaster. But first I have to bathe and wash my clothes, and I must plaster with my veil down. [3/3/82]

There are other general rules which must be observed with all mata, for they require a degree of honour and of loyalty from their zach members. Respect must be shown on all occasions.

MANZI BHAGAYO - When there is an offering prepared for the mata then it must be offered to her before anyone has eaten of it. If anyone so much as tastes the food while it is being prepared then the whole process is negated and must be repeated. [15/3/82]

As has been mentioned above, commitments made to the mata are not to be treated lightly.

S/O SHAVO BHOPA - If a man has promised to build up the wall of the madh on a certain day, but is called away on some other work or errand and cannot fulfill his promise, then harm will come to him. His son may be struck with pain in the stomach on his marriage day and die soon after. There is always danger for the son of a man who has thus ignored his promise to his mata. [19/10/81]

Whereas sons and wives may suffer at the hands of the mata, women born of the zach are in a position of grace. We have seen how offerings are first shared among the daughters, before even the children receive their share. The idea of the mata causing misfortune to befall a zach daughter was often shown to be outwith the bounds of possibility. For example, there was the case of the young woman spoken of by Mama Sahadeva's brother, Bizal.

BIZAL HANTHALPURA - She died eventually. In all her years of illness we never found out what was wrong with her. Some said dev, some said this, some said that.

DADI ZATI - How could it have been the dev? Was she not a daughter of the zach? Her dev might possess her, but no more. This must have been something else. [6/11/81]

Where wives and sons may suffer, the disloyalty of the bhopa earns great disapproval. When Shavo Bhopa turned to Bhakti and became a vegetarian he, at the same time, tried to leave his mata.

JNY - Can you, who are a vegetarian, sacrifice a goat?

SHAVO BHOPA - I may be a vegetarian, but if a dev demands that I sacrifice, then I have no choice in the matter.

BURO MAYANI - Dev have no tolerance of disobedience. You do something wrong, or you fail to do something that you should have done, and they are right on top of you. [1/9/81]

JNY - Is it a pap for you, a vegetarian, to even speak of meat?

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes, this is so.

BHOPI ZATI - But what can he do? He is, himself, a vegetarian. But, at the same time he is a madh keeper. When people bring goats and chickens to be sacrificed, he must prepare, cook, and offer the blood. If he does not, then the mata will make him ill. But, as long as he does not actually eat anything, he need not neglect his duties. [3/3/82]

SHAVO BHOPA - Once I tried to leave the mata which I serve. I took their images and threw them in the canal. I had a desire to follow the path of Bhakti...

But the mata would not let me leave them. I soon became very ill. My knees swelled up, and I ached all over and had a bad cough. I went to see many doctors, but none could cure me. Finally I went to see a bhopa. But all he said was I was not a bhopa myself? He told me that if I did not reinstate the mata I would never be cured.



So I restored the madh and my illness left me. Now I am stuck with the upkeep of the madh. In my heart I would rather follow the path of Bhakti, but I am tied to my mata. In that sense I am still a bhopa. [7/10/81]

Mata are seen to take an active interest in the preservation of zach honour and identity, and also of caste ideals, something which can be seen here in the comments of one of the oldest of the Sirah villagers.

NANI - We do not eat the food of Muslims because we worship dev. If we were to eat their food then our dev would grab us by the throat. They would cause illness in us or in our family. [9/3/82]

A zach's loyalty to their mata can be demonstrated in the series of individual and collective rites performed in their honour. We will look at these below. The major rite, which is performed on the day of Parwa, the Kori new year's day, is the offering to the mata of the hairlocks of all the zach's new-born sons. This is accompanied by the sacrifice demanded by the mata, which in most cases is a goat. Before we go on to examine these rites, let us examine how significant they are to the mata, and to the Kori themselves.

On one occasion Lakshman Adi'hra had been invited to the village of his WBS, Sona, to share in the eating of the goat which was to be sacrificed there.

ZAKAL - The goat is to be sacrificed to their dev. I do not know who their mata is, but she has caused the mother to go quite mad.

What happened is this. Sona's sister had a son, and so gave his parents a male kid to offer to their dev. But they sold it instead, whereupon the mother lost the power of speech, and her mind failed. A bhopa was consulted who immediately explained that the cause was the lack of sacrifice. Now they have bought another kid, and they will sacrifice tonight. The mother's madness has left her. [20/11/81]

Two ten-year-old boys once summed up the situation for me very graphically.

S/O SHAVO BHOPA - Come Divari (i.e. Parwa) there will be two hairlocks offered to the mata by the people of our zach. My hairlock has already been given, but not his.

S/O HAMIR MORANI - That is only because our madh is so far away. Mine will have to be given, though. For, when a son of the zach is born, then his hairlock must be given to the mata. It is given, tied up in a red or a white cloth. The hairlock of

the daughter does not matter, but that of the son must be given. If it is not then, when he is married, he will not be able to complete even one circle of the wedding fire before he will fall down, his stomach in agony. Such is the power of the mata. [19/10/81]

When we examine the life cycle as a whole in Chapter 6 we shall see that, following the offering of the soti, at the next rite of passage, which is marriage, more offerings are necessary to the mata. The main offering is made at the madh of the groom's zach after the Hutani festival, which has followed, and to a certain extent is part of, the marriage rites. The final rite of passage which, of old, necessitated mata involvement was the funeral.

LAKSJMAN ADI'HRA - At the funeral of my hahu (WM), the zach dev was placed in the centre (of the funeral diagram - see 6.4) when the (rite) was performed. Sometimes there is a brass idol, and sometimes stone. If there is nothing then the madh lamps are burned.

Before leaving, all members of the (extended) family gave money for dup for the dev. [1/5/82]

(The fact that this rite is being phased out to be replaced by one involving the Gita, and the implications of this, will also be discussed fully in Chapter 6.)

The area of responsibility of the zach mata extends beyond the Kori to their possessions. This is most notably witnessed in the event of a cow or a buffalo giving birth.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - If our cow or our buffalo give birth then we must "keep bota". This means that we do not use any of her milk, or ghi, or buttermilk. We milk her in the evening and make buttermilk. Then we milk her in the morning, heat up the buttermilk and take its ghi and offer it with the morning's milk. Having offered it, we give a little ghi and a little milk to every house in the hamlet. After that we can use the cow's milk for our own purposes.

JNY - What about goats?

RAMZI - We do not bother with goats. It is possible to make buttermilk with goat's milk, but we do not bother. It is only important to make an offering in the case of a cow or a buffalo. [8/5/82]

### SECTION 5.3: THE DIVALI COMPLEX

The following phrase is often repeated after the rites of Hachmo are over.

First there are Hor (16) Harad. These are followed by No (9) Northa. These are followed by Vih (20) Divali. And then we wake up and it is Parwa, and everyone says "Ram Ram".

Harad lasts for sixteen days, Northa for nine days, and twenty days after the nine Northa there is Divali. The morning after the evening of Divali is Parwa, when everyone greets each other. Parwa occurs at the beginning of the Cold Season, usually in November.

This whole period forms a ritual complex culminating in the major event in the annual cycle of festivals. This complex focuses on the mata's relationship with the zach as a whole, with the bhopa as its representative, and with its newborn male members as its individual components. As we have done in the case of Hachmo, we must rely on the statements of the informants coupled with the events witnessed by the ethnographer, and piece together as much as possible of the overall picture which exists in the traditions of the Kori villager.

As is often the case, the festival remembered is not the same as the one witnessed. Discrepancies occur where memories are faulty, or when emphasis is placed on creating the right impression rather than on being totally accurate. As the event itself approaches, memories become clearer and descriptions are more detailed. It is worth bearing this in mind as the following information is examined.

#### I. Hor Harad and No Northa

Although still thought of in connection with the complex as a whole, Hor Harad has little practical significance to the Kori villager, who is usually aware of its passing because of the arrival of No Northa which follows. Lakshman Bhagat was able to give the most detail as to what it involved.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Hor Harad is now over. No-one pays much attention to it now anyway. In the old days people used to

take ghi, milk, and rotlo, mix them together, and feed the crows. They said they did it for the dharam of their deceased family members such as their mother or father. The crows could fly away and reach the ziv of the dead, you see. [30/9/81]

In contrast, the No Northa have a high profile in the Kori calendar.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - No Northa is the time of the bhopa. They are possessed by their mata and dund (shake). This used to be commonplace, but not so these days. [15/5/81]

JNY - Is it true that the Akhiyani worship the female camel?

DADI ZATI - This is true. If you ever go to the big madh of their mata, Momai, you will see images of her camel.

DADI ZATU - It will be beautifully decorated with expensive clothes and decorations. The madh will have a bhopa, and at No Northa he will work himself into a frenzy, whipping himself with red hot chains. This happens at all the madh every twelve months. [29/9/81]

VIRO PAJI - If you really wish to see a spectacle you should go with Zavo the day after tomorrow when he takes his wife and son, Babu, to our madh, which is to the north of Tando Sumaro. At least five bhopa will be there, and there will really be something to see. Many people will come. There will be sweet rice on the evening of Atham (the eighth), and a goat will be killed on the morning of Nom (the ninth). [30/10/81]

Other than to dund, the bhopa has less spectacular things to do at No Northa.

DADI ZATI - The Mayani madh is at Buro's village. Shavo is their bhopa. At No Northa the madh are replastered, and the bhopa sit for nine days in front of them. They eat only once a day: at noon. If they are great bhopa they do not eat at all until the ninth day. All the Mayani with new born sons will gather there at No Northa. [29/9/81]

JNY - What, and when, can you eat during No Northa?

SHAVO BHOPA - Oh, anything - rotlo, ghi, vegetables. But I can only eat once a day, at noon. And it is only then that I can drink tea or water.

JNY - Are you allowed to leave the madh during the days of No Northa?

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes, for I am a poor man, and have work to do and animals to look after. I have to leave the madh sometimes.

As well as fasting and dunding, the bhopa offers sacrifices to the mata. During the later days of No Northa, Huzo Akhiyani came every evening to the Akhiyani madh and burned offerings of ghi to the two mata. I asked him why.

HUZO AKHIYANI - These are the nine days of the mata. Actually, this offering should have been performed from the beginning of No Northa, and I thought that the others would be doing it. But no-one has been, so I suppose I have to.

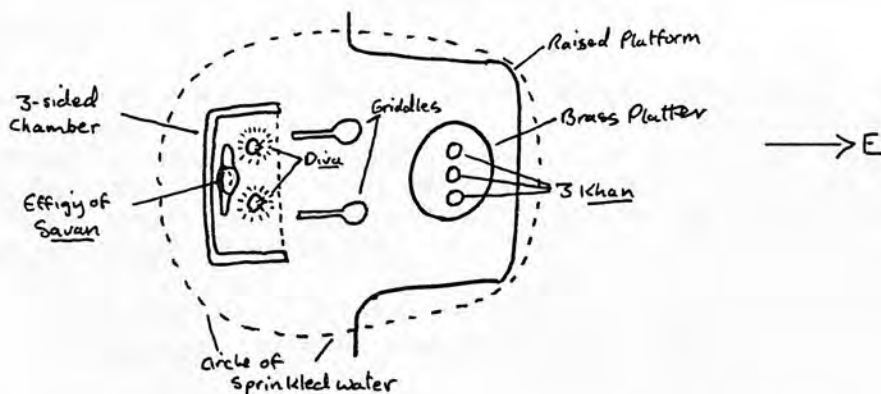
JNY - Are you doing zar?

HUZO - No, I am just doing dup. Dup is when you offer to the mata only. Zar is when you do dup, and then share the offering among the children. [3/10/81]

Several days later, I witnessed the proceedings at the Mayani madh on the evening of Atham, the "eighth day".

Shavo Bhopa sat inside the madh, and had two diva lit, each with two cotton wicks. There was also a dish containing ghi from which the diva were periodically topped up. Mayani boys and girls began to arrive, each carrying a tray of small rotlo, a brass bowl of green lentils, and a cup of ghi. One such tray was thus provided by each Mayani household. A large brass tray was placed in front of the diva, and the two raised griddles were filled with the glowing coals of dung cakes.

In turn, each of the rotlo was mixed with the ghi and the lentils on each brass tray. A pinch of this mixture was then placed on the griddles and three portions (khan) were placed on the large brass tray. What remained in each bowl was then poured into a separate tray and the remaining rotlo were set to one side. The process was repeated with the trays from each household, and eventually the three khan had merged into one large pile of the mixture.



Finally, water was taken from a brass drinking vessel and sprinkled in a circle around the entire array of mata, khan, diva, and griddles. The khan were shared among the daughters of the zach, the mixture on the second tray was distributed among the children, and the rotlo were fed to the



cows and goats.

Apparently this ritual had been performed every evening of No Northa. The ghi for the diva was supplied by each house in turn. I asked how the offerings were shared out.

HADHU MAYANI (s/o Shavo Bhopa) - Only the daughters of the zach can eat of it. None of the wives can, for they are of separate zach.

JNY - Do the villagers give zar every night?

SHAVO BHOPA - Yes, they must do so, first offering to the mata before they can eat themselves. Until zar has been performed, not even the youngest child can eat that which has been cooked.

Now it is finished for the villagers. I, myself, have to do zar tomorrow morning, and then I will have my freedom. But the others are now finished.

JNY - Why do you circle the artifacts with water?

SHAVO BHOPA - I was doing son. The fire is hot, you see, and so we must do son to make sure that the offerings remain cool. The water must be sprinkled all around them. [6/10/81]

The following day I watched Shavo Bhopa perform his final dup.

The diva were not lit. Two brass plates of wheat porridge topped with ghi were brought. These were from the households of Shavo and of Hadhu, his son. The porridge was offered on the griddles, and three khan were placed before the mata. These were then shared out, and Hadhu and his younger brother ate what remained between them.

When the zar was completed, all the men and women of the zach came and bowed before the mata in turn. [7/10/81]

We returned to Sirah that evening to find that the rituals there were still going on.

As had been the case at the Mayani madh, offerings of rotlo, green lentils, and ghi were brought from the houses of both Huza Akhiyani and Buro Bhopa to the Akhiyani madh. The rites performed were the same, except that all offerings were first rested over a glass of water - to "cool" them before they were offered. Only one of the two mata, Momai, received offerings. I asked why.

HUZO AKHIYANI - Tonight we offer to Momai. Tomorrow we offer to Raz Bai, and that offering will be sweet.

The two diva were lit, nevertheless.

Later I asked Dadi Zati what was going on.

DADI ZATI - They will do this only tonight. They may have done it last night at Shavo's, but things differ from madh to madh. [7/10/81]

"Nau Northa" is also celebrated in Uttar Pradesh, where Marriott (1969:201) sees the name as a dialectic variant of "Nav Ratri" - the "Nine Nights" goddess festival. Among the Bhils, Doshi (1971) finds "Navratri" to be the time when offerings are made to the clan goddess in return for her protection. The "No Northa" of the Kori thus ~~can~~ be seen to link in with wider Hindu practices.

## II. Garabi Singing

There is one other aspect of the No Northa rites which has not yet been mentioned. Indeed, it was not mentioned by the Kori themselves when they talked beforehand of what happened at No Northa. It was talked about only when it was actually happening, and even then with reluctance. This was not because it was mysterious or sinister, but because it was seen by all to be trivial; all, that is, apart from those who took part in it - the village girls and young women.

On the first night of No Northa we were chatting with the old ladies at Arjan's house when we heard the singing. Distant at first, as if from a passing radio, came the sound of womens' voices. Gradually we became aware of its existence as we talked. We were told that it was "just the girls playing the garabi."

We hurried off in the direction of the sound. The village girls and some of the young wives - they were led by Rano Akhiyani's wife, Chali, who was a good singer and knew the songs well - were taking round the garabi. This was a clay pot with many holes bored in its side through which could be seen the flickering light from a divo lamp. The procession of singers had started at the house of Nilo Kotwar and was growing in numbers as it made its way around the houses of the village in an anti-clockwise direction (S-E-N-W-S). Outside each house the girls stopped and sang songs. We were told that they would continue to sing every night of No Northa. [29/9/81]

The songs ranged from half serious to being pure mischief, and were accompanied with much giggling as the singers made as much as they dared of their licence to poke fun at men, mainly young men (see Plate IV.).

HAKU (w/o Zavo Paji) - They sing to the mata of each house. Pansa (Akhiyani) was angry with them because two nights running they sang for Bessarazi to give him a son. Bessarazi is not his mata anyway, but the name comes in the song. His mata is Momai.

Bessarazi dear, mother of ours

Give brother Pansa a son  
Mother of ours  
He will sing as he rocks the cradle  
Mother of ours...  
[1/10/81]

NILA (d/o Manu Varesa) - Last night the girls sang two songs in front of your house. One was, "JNY and CSLY sleep lightly, and you will receive a mond of grain." (Grain is given by the village children to the mother of the baby boy at his naming ceremony - see 6.1) The other was, "JNY is receiving seven brides, but he binds anklets on only one". (JNY Has the choice of seven brides, but chooses only one.) [30/9/81]

NANI - The girls are singing to the mata, asking her to give the household a son. Yesterday they sang at Baya (d/o Mama Sahadeva)'s house, and asked their mata to give her a brother. [30/9/81]

On the second night a different song was sung outside our house, accompanied by even more giggling:

On the washing plank  
Brother JNY is washing his loincloth  
Wife CSLY fetches the water  
Slowly, carefully wash that loincloth

Only some of the songs sung were lighthearted, however.

JNY - What were the girls singing about last night?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - They were singing hymns to the mata. Not just to the one mata, but to the mata of the house they happened to be in front of. Different zach have different mata.

They will sing for nine days, and on the afternoon of the ninth day every household will give them five rupees. They will then buy sweets with this money, and share them around.

JNY - Do they do dup with these sweets first?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - No, they are just shared out. [30/9/81]

When we visited the Mayani village, we found that the girls did not "play the garabi" there. The womenfolk did, however, gather each evening at the platform outside the madh to sing hymns (none of which, unfortunately, were recorded). I later asked Dadi Zati, herself from the

Mayani zach, why this was so.

DADI ZATI - Oh, the girls will sing the garabi if they are keen. At the Mayani village there are few young girls and they do not know the songs, while here (at Sirah) there are many. But where there is a big madh, such as Shavo's, the women gather to sing songs. Afterwards the girls can sing around the village if they wish to. They are all garabi songs that are sung. [7/10/81]

This, then, was the No Northa that was experienced by the ethnographer. A scattering of experiences pieced together. A time associated with the mata and her representative, the bhopa. A time when fasting is done and offerings are made, and when young girls sing out requests to zach mata for more sons, thereby gaining licence to be bawdy. Lakshman Bhagat tended to have a low opinion of the current No Northa rites when he compared them with those of the past.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - No Northa used to be like a carnival (mera). Everyone came from all around. Day after day the bhopa would sit and would dund. It would finally finish on the evening of the ninth day. But now only the villagers gather, although at the Mayani village many still come to their madh. [12/10/81]

### III. Dan Teris and Kara Soudis

Hor Harad is a time of communication, through crows, with the dead. No Northa is a time when future generations are requested, and when the power and position of the zach mata and her bhopa is affirmed. But the build-up is towards Parwa, the day after Divali (Divari) when the old meets the new.

As is the case with Hor Harad, Dan Teris (ter = 13) is significant now because it is part of the Divali sequence, rather than because it has any importance on its own.

JNY - What will happen at Dan Teris?

BURO BHOPA - Nothing much. In the evening people may offer zar of a mixture of green lentils and rice cooked together (kisari). [23/10/81]

BHOPI ZATI - Soon it will be Dan Teris. Then everyone will wash their clothes in preparation for Divali. [19/10/81]

By comparison, Kara Soudis is a much more spectacular event, if only for the bhopa and their disciples. ("Soud" = 14, therefore "Black Fourteenth". In Gujarat, Pocock - 1973:86 - notes the festival of "Kali Choudis", the night of Shiva.) The bhopa's activities intrigue the ordinary villager.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - On Kara Soudis, the day before Divali, the bhopa and their sela gather in the graveyards. They spend all night there, inside the "circle of Hanuman", which the bhopa marks out in the ground with a knife. They are safe inside this circle, and the ghosts and dzinn come to see them. The bhopa takes boiled grain with him, which he feeds to the ghosts and dzinn. During the night of Kara Soudis the sela revise all their ilim so that they are reminded of what they may have forgotten during the year. [15/5/81]

I asked Shavo Bhopa whether he went to the graveyard at Kara Soudis.

SHAVO BHOPA - No, I have never gone. If a bhopa knows the necessary ilim then he can go. I have never known it. [7/10/81]

It would appear that, while the impressive Mayani madh was highly regarded by all in its surrounding neighbourhood, its bhopa was not too keen to live up to peoples' expectations of what he should be and do. His wife, however, was proud of the less spectacular things which it was his duty to do, and which were, nevertheless, useful for the well-being of the madh and the village as a whole. She spoke of these duties in general terms.

BHOPI ZATI - After Dan Teris comes Kara Soudis. Then, wherever there is a bhopa, he will sit in front of his madh and recite jadhu, having first offered raw sugar cooked in sesame oil as zar. He will recite the jadhu which are effective against scorpions, and snakes, and such things. [19/10/81]

Whereas at No Northa the bhopa sat at the madh and made offerings on behalf of the zach to the mata, at Kara Soudis he performs rites which affirm his own individual relationship with the mata, through which he has access to the power which he demonstrates at the following No Northa - e.g. by dunding.



#### IV. Divali

Clearly we see that the day before Divali is a time for revision, before memories are lost forever. It is a time for re-affirming power that has been gained through knowledge. What then of Divali itself.

BURO BHOPA - Divali is the big day. It begins in the evening when diva (clay lamps) will be lit and firecrackers set off by the children. Then in the morning we will come out and greet each other saying, "Ram Ram". This is Parwa, and goats will be cooked and there will be much feasting. Here at Sirah there will be two hairlocks offered at the madh: Karam's son's, and Huzo's son's (both Akhiyani). [23/10/81]

BAYA (w/o Vershi Adi'hra) - You must witness Divali. People will cook wheat pudding and rice, and those with madh will do worship (puza). If they have had a son they will take a lock of his hair from the top of his head and place it in the madh trunk along with a yard of red and of white cloth. There it will stay.

If a son has been born in the year past then the family will offer meat and feed the hamlet. Arjan will if he has a son. (Arjan's wife was pregnant at that time.) If a goat is sacrificed, then its blood is caught in a dish. This is then cooked with salt and offered to the mata. [22/8/81]

These proved to be brief, but fairly accurate, summaries of the Divari/Parwa rites as we experienced them.

The day after Kara Soudis passed quickly. Houses were replastered, and the village was made neat and tidy. Sweet smells began to drift out from cooking areas, and children gathered in excitement. We had a supper of wheat pudding, in keeping with the festive season, and were then brought plates of rice, wheat pudding, vegetable sauce, and sweets from all the neighbouring houses. We reciprocated to the best of our ability.

Suddenly it was dark, but all the houses were lit by the pure light of diva. Children ran around with fireworks which glowed or sparkled.

Later, we went for a walk through the glowing, shimmering village: a place of enchantment. Out in the sand the boys were letting off fireworks. Chandar Zandariya had invited guests from town, and was entertaining them well. Back at Arjan's house the pressure lamp was being lit, and soon the menfolk began to arrive, all set for a night's gambling.

[27/10/81]

## V. Parwa

The morning after Divali, after drinking their cup of tea, everyone began to greet each other. Men and women circled from house to house, men with their heads covered in respect.

The village animals had all been touched with pink (gulabi) dye. Buffaloes cows and goats had red horns. Our own goat had been given a generous splash of dye on each of its flanks.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - Today is a day of rejoicing. Everyone will be in their best clothes. The animals are also made beautiful with dye. Today they will not be put to work. No cart or plough will be driven, and they will be fed the best foods.

Most of the women and several men were in tears, mourning openly the sadness of the past year. Some had lost relatives through death, others had lost daughters through marriage. [28/10/81]

BHOPI ZATI - On Divali (Parwa) some people cry, some people laugh. They cry because they recall all that has happened throughout that year, whether there have been deaths or troubled times. I remember when I was in Khokar a boy of mine died twelve days before Divali. For twelve days, everywhere I went I would remember that he had been there too, or that he had said this, or that he had done that. We buried him and had his Bhao, but for twelve days I was sad. Then, on Divali, I remembered him no more and my sadness left me. I still remember him now and again but although there is pain it is never so great. [19/10/81]

Here Bhopi Zati expresses the coming of Divali as not merely a temporal event. Rather than her grief being less by the time Divali came, Divali visibly lessened her grief.

On this Parwa morning we finished our own tour of greeting, and ended up, as did most of the village, at the uthak of Radhu Akhiyani. There the large photograph of the old patel, Rama, was being greeted, mainly by weeping women, and much money was lifted before it in offering by them. The menfolk sat around in communal sorrow, while Bharat Patel spoke words of encouragement: "The past is now gone and we have the present to live." Rhadu had gone himself to his father's grave to do dup. The sugar sweets which had been offered were brought back and shared. Then tea was made and the whole village invited to share in it. [28/10/81]

There can be no doubt that Parwa is a time for mending quarrels and re-affirming relationships. Such actions are given justification by the reasoning Ramzi uses in the following incident he describes.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - This is why we say "Ram Ram" to each other at Parwa. Ram and Lakshman were brothers, and lived together. Ram had to go out hunting, and so Lakshman stayed at home with Ram's wife, Sita. In those times people wore no clothes, but covered themselves with leaves. When Ram returned he found Sita and Lakshman together. He was very angry, thinking that they had been unfaithful, for was she not Lakshman's

bhabhi (eBW - joking relationship)?

But, eventually, they repaired their quarrel and said "Ram Ram". And that is why we say "Ram Ram" at Parwa, for that was the day when they made up their quarrel. [9/3/82]

Let us return, however to the events that occurred at Parwa in 1981.

Earlier on, Huzo had brought out four plates of green lentils and rice topped with ghi, and four coconuts. These were from the houses in his hamlet, and were to be offered as zar to the Akhiyani mata. The zar was offered: a portion of everything to Raz Bai, but only the coconut to Momai. It was then shared out among the village children, one plate being set aside especially for the daughters of the zach.

A final zar was later performed by Buro Bhopa on behalf of his own household. He followed a proce dure similar to Huzo's offering green lentils and rice, sweet rice, rotlo, and ghi (see Plate III.). [28/10/81]

These are examples of general offerings made by individual households at Parwa. I once interrogated Bhopi Zati on the general offerings made to the Mayani mata at the major annual festivals. Being the wife of the bhopa, she was the one who cooked the offerings and was in a position to answer accurately as follows.

BHOPI ZATI - THE ANNUAL OFFERING CYCLE:

Hutani\* - No offerings to the mata

Dorali\* - Green lentil flour cooked with rice (khisari) - Shikothar

Akhatri - Raw sugar and ghi - Savan

Hachmo - Flour, ghi, and raw sugar - Sitla Mata

No Northa - Evenings: Green lentils, rotlo, ghi - Shikothar

Kara Soudis - Sugar - Hanuman

Divari - No offering

Parwa - Khisari - Shikothar

(\* - see 6.3)

[16/10/81]

We can see from this table that the mata is included in most major annual rites, the exceptions being Hachmo and Kara Soudis where Sitla Mata and Hanuman take precedence. The mata is also central to the life cycle of the individual member of her zach. Whereas offerings are made at the birth of a son, the major rite of his acceptance is when his hairlock, his soti, is offered at Parwa.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - At Parwa the soti of the newborn son is given to the mata. The hair of the son can be cut beforehand, but one lock must be left uncut for the mata. It is cut when she gives the order. When the bhopa is possessed and says that the mata requests the soti, then it is offered. If the son is the eldest then a goat will also be requested. [8/5/82]

In the case of Parbhu Akhiyani's eldest son, however, no goat was offered on the morning of Parwa, 1981.

Buro Bhopa was in charge of the proceedings. Parbhu brought along his infant son, and with him, from his house, came plates of khisari, green lentil sauce with rice, sweet rice with raw sugar, and coconut. Momai was offered only that which was sweet, whereas Raz Bai was offered everything.

Parbhu cut a lock of hair from his son's forehead and bound it up in the yard of new red cloth which he had with him. This, and a yard of new white cloth were then placed in Momai's trunk. Buro Bhopa then took the boy in his arms, clasped his little hands together, and bowed four times to the madh. The food was then shared.

After having had tea at Radhu's we quickly journeyed to the Mayani village, fearing that we would miss the ceremony of sacrifice being held there. On our arrival we discovered the inverse of what had happened twenty days before. While the Mayani appeared to celebrate No Northa one day before the Akhiyani of Sirah, they now appeared to be performing their Parwa sacrifice one day after the Parwa zar was performed at Sirah. Those who had come to offer their sons' soti were to make their first offering that evening.

Evening was still a long way off, and so we sat in various houses and whiled away the time while people dropped in and out. No work was being done apart from the preparations for the coming rites. Dadi Zati arrived, escorted by Rano Akhiyani and Ramshi Varesa, Ramshi then continuing his longer journey with his wife and son to the madh of his own zach where the son's soti was to be offered. Zavo Bhopa came by and lamented the fact that so much was to be done and no-one was willing to do it, that items needed to be bought and there was no money, that invitations had been sent out but the guests would never come, and that there were no enthusiasts left among the Mayani. He wept before Dadi Zati, herself one of the more prestigious of the Mayani women.

In the evening those who were to offer soti brought coconuts and wheat pudding to the madh. These were offered in zar to Savan. Several rupees were also placed in the trunks of the madh. [28/10/81]

The following morning a group of men and boys gathered by the madh to watch the proceedings. Before they could be sacrificed the two goats, one for each of the soti being offered, had to "present" themselves willingly before Shikothar. A good half hour was spent by Bizal Mayani encouraging the smaller of the two red-brown coloured male kids to do this. He sat on the north side of the raised platform outside the madh entrance, stroking the kid soothingly, and pleading, "Go! Go! Go!", and to the mata, "Take! Take! Take!"

DADI ZATI - All one can do is stroke it and leave it to the mata. She must instruct it to come.

Eventually a halt was called to the proceedings. The larger kid had already presented itself. A boy of the zach cut its throat and held it down on some straw to the north of the platform, feet facing west. Its blood was drained into a large brass tray, and some was kept separately in a cup. It was then butchered and a part of its fat burnt in offering to Shikothar along with a sprinkling of blood from the cup.



A second knife was used in the butchering. The kid was suspended by its hind legs from a rope attached to a pole held aloft by Buro and Karam. Before being used on the carcass itself, the knife was used to slice up the blood which had coagulated in the tray. At one point Buro murmured to the man doing the butchering, "Bear Sita in mind". Only the head, skin, stomach, were discarded into a dung basket.

DADI ZATI - The cup of raw blood must first be offered. Then the rest of the blood is cooked along with the liver and the lungs - they are black and red, you see. This is then offered to the mata and then shared out. This is the sheh. Finally the meat itself is cooked and eaten.

We saw that the smaller kid was by then also being butchered.

DADI ZATI - The kid needs only to be glimpsed by the mata. It need not actually enter the madh.

I asked a man who was from the village of Mule when the soti themselves were to be given.

MAYANI FROM MULE - The goat is given first. Then the soti is given that day, or the next. A small lock of hair will be placed with the mata. The rest will be thrown into the canal.

Later, when it had been cooked, all men, it mattered not which zach they were from, were called to "come and receive sheh". Plates of sheh were laid out on straw mats and everyone present reached out to take and eat at least one mouthful.

SHAVO BHOPA - The sheh is that part of the kid which belongs to the mata. [29/10/81]

## VI. Summary

Perhaps the most striking thing about the Divali complex is the way that diverse themes are present within the rituals. The evening of Divali is a time of beauty and light, of sweet food, and of remembering the legends of the Ramayana common to orthodox Hinduism. It is followed by Parwa which is a time of violent sacrifice, of blood and savoury food, and of offerings to the more immediate mata of the village Hindu. Although the complex is referred to as Divali it is celebrated as Parwa. Although the knowledgeable explain it with reference to the Ramayana, the illiterate majority think of it in terms of the gathering of the zach, and the appeasing of the zach mata.

The direct opposition between the supposedly orthodox doctrine of Bhakti and the cults of the mata will be discussed below. Here, however,



it is interesting to note how the two come together at a time when the old is replaced by the new, when the past is remembered in sorrow, but new beginnings are made. And, contrary to current trends which are fashionable in Kori belief, it is the more "orthodox" Divali which is followed in temporal sequence by the re-affirmation of the zach mata.

One theme, however, is shared by this and all other Kori festivals. Where ever they are spoken of they are seen as a highlight, a distraction from the hard daily life of the farmer, a life of insecurity and struggle. This is their most important attribute. All other explanations of them are secondary.

#### SECTION 5.4: CONCLUSIONS - BHAKTI AND MATA

##### I. Vegetarian and Non-vegetarian Mata

In this chapter we have focussed on the place of the mata in the corporate and the individual life of the zach members, and of her importance to their well-being in their present life. The relationship between the Kori and their mata is not without its difficulties, however, the main one revealing itself in the opposition between certain pairs of zach mata. This opposition is illustrated dramatically in the way Savan has to be treated before it is possible to sacrifice to her partner.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - We have Khetarpar and Savan. Every year we must offer a male goat to Khetarpar. But first we have to cover Savan with a cloth, for otherwise she would not allow the taking of a life. [6/5/82]

Savan is a vegetarian, whereas Khetarpar accepts animal sacrifices, and it is common to have vegetarian and non-vegetarian mata housed in the same madh. A similar relationship exists between Savan and Shikothar, as we have already seen. We have also seen Momai described as dharmi, while Raz Bai, her partner, is seen to be formidable. The concept of dharam, although much older itself, has clear associations with the traditions of Bhakti, notable among which is the promotion of vegetarianism. Nevertheless, Momai is reputed to accept the sacrifice of goats (5.2,II).

Confusion regarding the desires of mata is ever present. The following conversation caused Lavi considerable embarrassment.

JNY - Which of your mata are vegetarian?

LAVI DUNGARANI - None are vegetarian. They all demand goats.

JNY - But the Mayani say that Savan (also a Dungarani mata) is vegetarian.

LAVI - They may... But that is their affair. (He scowled and changed the subject.) [8/3/82]

Having established and highlighted Savan's vegetarian status, Buro Mayani took every opportunity to emphasise her superiority over Shikothar (e.g. see 5.2,II). Zavo Bhopa, however, was unwilling even to concede her vegetarianism.

BURO MAYANI - Shikothar demands chickens. She also demands goats. She is not a vegetarian, whereas Savan is.

ZAVO BHOPA - Savan demands goats too. What she demands depends upon when the sacrifice happens to take place. [1/9/81]

But, while at that particular time Zavo Bhopa was not too impressed by the distinction made by Buro, at a later date he himself underlined it.

JNY - Can sweet and savoury offerings be made to the same mata?

ZAVO BHOPA - No! The vegetarian mata accepts sweet offerings, while the non-vegetarian accepts savoury. But these days people are known to have varied this rule. [24/2/82]

Dadi Zati had verified this latter statement the day before.

JNY - Are sweet and savoury offerings offered to the same dev?

DADI ZATI - Yes, but on different occasions. At Dorali (Holi), the morning after Hutani, savoury lentils, or khisari and ghi are offered. At Parwa the offering is also savoury. But after a wedding the offering is sweet. [23/2/82]

It would appear that the conflict between Bhakti and dev is even reflected in the character of the dev themselves, some conforming to the ideals of Bhakti more than others. Dasrath made an effort to explain to me how he saw this conflict arising in the first place.

DASRATH SHEKHANI - We are all given our own paths to follow, and they are our duty. Our duty is to do work and to do Bhakti. In the beginning there was only Bhakti. Then people

began to have faith in dev. But now more and more people are going back to Bhakti again. Yet Bhakti and Devipuza are only two paths leading to the same goal. What can dev do? They can but worship Ishvar, and Ishvar is supreme. When people ask dev for things, can the dev grant their request without Ishvar knowing? No! All the dev can do is present the request to Ishvar, and only by Ishvar's will can the request be granted. [30/9/81]

In voicing these opinions which are common among the Kori, Dasrath highlights the difference between them and the Hindus of Kangra, where Sharma (1978b:63) finds no practical distinction drawn between sanskritic and non-sanskritic deities.

It was possible to sense that, despite his claims that he had struggled with his mata in an effort to leave them for the path of Bhakti, Zavo Bhopa, in many ways, enjoyed the status which being a bhopa brought him. We can see some bitterness in his views of the undeniable growth in interest in Bhakti at the expense of the dev.

JNY - Are more people becoming vegetarian these days?

ZAVO BHOPA - Everybody seems to be vegetarian these days. You get little boys of so high (he indicated an exaggeratedly small size with his hand) claiming that they are vegetarian. Before we all used to accept meat. [3/3/82]

Dumont (1970b:27/28) while discussing the co-existence of vegetarian and non-vegetarian gods in Tamil Nadu, argues that they complement each other (see also 1.2). The meat eating gods are only seen to exist by the sanction of the vegetarian gods, the existence of the former serving to dignify the latter who, while separate from them, rule over them (ibid:30). Das (1982:112/3) challenges Dumont's conclusion, that the superiority of the vegetarian gods is due to their relative purity, however, arguing that the opposition in operation is not pure/impure but life/death. Das thus brings a moral dimension into the equation, something which the Kori's association of non-vegetarian mata with pap adds weight to.

The fact that certain mata demand the sacrifice of animals raises a certain dilemma for those who have to offer it. We have seen how Zavo Bhopa answered when he was asked whether, by doing this, he committed pap (Ch 3). When Jari, herself an overt follower of Bhakti, was asked this she answered much the same.

JARI - If that is what the dev demands then what can we do? If the dev's own mouth demands that we give a goat then we

must comply, or else we ourselves will suffer. But the pap will not be ours, it will be hers (i.e. the dev's), and will fall on her. [8/5/82]

Pocock (1973:Ch4), agreeing to some extent with Dumont, argues that in the past the differing deities of Gujarati Hindus had a symbiotic relationship with each other. Worship of the pure, male Shiva, for example, was complemented by worship of his worldly, female counterpart: Shaktipuja. Pocock finds that this pure/impure, male/female complementarity is now being replaced by the idealistic, pure Vaishnavism of Bhakti (ibid:107), something which is supported by the current trend among the Kori.

Dasrath, however, treated the whole issue with his usual cynicism.

JNY - When a goat is sacrificed to a dev is the dev not committing pap?

DASRATH SHEKHANI - No. I will tell you what really happens. A man has a son who is ill, and so he takes him to the bhopa. The bhopa asks what is wrong, and then studies his beads. Now, who is to know if the beads are saying anything to him? But he looks up and says, "The dev asks for a goat."

What can the father do? It is his son who is ill. Of course he will give a goat. But who will eat it? The bhopa and his family will eat it. The sacrifice is not the pap of the dev, but of the bhopa. [6/5/82]

This was an extreme view which certainly was not borne out by all the evidence. In the event of a sacrifice the bhopa would receive his share. But so would the village as a whole, as well as zach guests invited for the occasion.

## II. Buffalo Sacrifice

While the demands of mata for chickens or goats might have been embarrassing, the demands of some mata were kept at a convenient distance by the Indian border. For they did not just demand animal sacrifice, but the sacrifice of the very animals which, by their commensal prohibition, served to elevate the Kori above the other Hindu castes of Sind to their high caste status: buffalo.

One evening Arjan was joking with Dadi Zati about the eating of buffalo meat. Her guard softened and she drew me into her confidence as a Kori.

DADI ZATI - In India there is a very tall madh of Mata Raveshi. Every twelve months pada (male buffalo calves) are sacrificed there. They come of their own free will. No-one brings them or buys them. They come running right up the side of the madh to the top, where two men await them. When they reach the top their heads are chopped off with one stroke of the sword, and they fall to the bottom. There they are given in offering, and are cooked and eaten by all present. All who go to the madh, whether Brahman or whatever their caste, must eat at least a mouthful of the cooked flesh. Those who do not wish to eat it do not go. If it is refused Raveshi sends illness or misfortune on that person. (Pocock - 1973:65/6 - finds that even Gujarati Brahman can be compromised in a similar fashion.)

ARJAN ADI'HRA - There are Kori who worship Raveshi. Many zach do. But the sacrifices take place in India. [26/10/81]

Buro Mayani explained this phenomenon to me in more depth.

BURO MAYANI - People of the Paji zach follow Raveshi. Her madh used to be here but, when Pakistan and India became separated, it was taken to India. It is the same with all the main madh. They are all in India, and here we have to make do with what we can.

The pada come on a certain day. They come of their own free will, in obedience to the request of the mata. It is not actually Raveshi who drinks their blood, it is Karkiya Mata. Raveshi is the greater of the two, and it is only by her permission that Karkiya can drink the blood of the pada.

The pada come to the madh and they must be killed with one mighty stroke of the sword. You or I would not have the strength to do such a deed. Only a man with enough strength can put himself forward for it. [28/10/81]

Later, Nilo Kotwar, himself of the Paji zach, verified these statements, although attributing the sacrifice to yet another mata.

JNY - I have heard that the Kori used to eat pada.

NILO KOTWAR - Yes, that was so. In fact our mata are Khoriyar and Shikothar, and pada used to be offered to Khoriyar.

NANI - Used to be? My der (HyB) visited us once from India, and he said that the Paji there still eat pada.

NILO KOTWAR - That is not the way it is at all! We do not eat pada just for their meat. There is the madh of Khoriyar, and the pada come there of their own accord once a year. If they come of their own free will, who are we to neglect our duty to sacrifice them? They wander to the very top of the building,



and there they are dispatched with a single blow of the sword. But this happens in India.

JNY - Do both of your mata demand animal sacrifices?

NILO KOTWAR - No, only Shikothar. Khoriyar does not demand them, although she may do so in India. [17/11/81]

In the sacrifice of the buffalo we see the antipathy between the values of Bhakti and those of Devipuza. The vegetarian lifestyle of the bhagat not only increases his dharam, it also increases his social standing. In contrast, killing the buffalo and eating its meat are activities which not only incur great pap, but also are associated with the lower castes from which the Kori wish to distance themselves. (Pocock - 1973:44 - comments on the tendency in Gujarat for the mata's medium to be from a low caste background.) This form of buffalo sacrifice, however, also sets Devipuza against Islam, for the latter only sanctions animals deaths by the slitting of their throat, and thoroughly disapproves of decapitation. It is interesting that, unlike in India, Devipuza in Sind attempts to please both the bhagat and the Muslim, for not only are there no buffalo sacrifices - even where in India this is prescribed by the zach mata concerned - but the goats which are substituted are sacrificed by having their throats slit, not by decapitation.

### III. Summary

We began this chapter with a study of Sitla Mata, the Smallpox Goddess, and of the way she was appeased at the annual Hachmo festival. We saw, however, that the successful eradication of smallpox was perceived as proof of her diminishing power. Hachmo remained an event in the annual calander, but it was important chiefly for the women who carried out its rituals.

Our study of the zach mata affirmed their status as guardians of the zach, mediated by their bhopa, who demanded respect and loyalty in return. Individuals born into the zach were also drawn into a lifelong relationship with the mata, one which was re-affirmed at major rites of passage such as naming, marriage, and death. In return the power of the mata was available through the bhopa to protect them or cure their illness.

While the relationship between zach and mata was re-affirmed at No Northa, that between the mata and the newborn son was affirmed at Parwa. The Divali/Parwa festival united the old and the new in many other ways also. It was a time of remembering past sadness, of revising ilim, of renewing relationships, and of the old year itself giving way to the new. Divari/Parwa had another dimension to it, however, for the new "orthodoxy" of Bhakti was symbolised in the evening of Divali, while the "traditional" heterogeneity of Devipuza was celebrated at Parwa the following morning.

In our study of the mata it has been impossible to avoid the manner in which their worship is opposed to that of the bhagat. Whereas the latter aspire to "high caste" values, those who do the former, with its necessary sacrifices, are associated with low caste practices. The dilemmas posed for Devipuza by the growth of vegetarianism has been partially mediated by the institution of the vegetarian mata. Nevertheless, the taint of pap remains.

This is not to say, however, that mata are being rejected wholesale in favour of Bhakti. Their power is very real in the Kori's world of the present, and their relationship with the individual zach member is taken very seriously. Present well-being is still very much the concern of the group, and therefore of the zach and its mata. Solidarity with others brings security to the life of the individual. Future well-being, however, is a matter of concern for the individual alone, and is a source of inconvenience to the group as we shall see in the Chapter which follows.

Before we leave our study of dev, let us briefly look at a final threat to their power. Mata were not just being threatened by the doctrines of Bhakti which frown upon them, but also by the ilim of the doctor which in many cases is usurping them (see 4.1,IV). There are, nevertheless, occasions where the treatment of doctors is ineffective.

RANO AKHIYANI - It is no use going to a doctor when you are the victim of jadhu. A doctor will only give injections, and what good will that do? For jadhu you must go to the bhopa.  
[5/8/81]

Rano, however, was willing to admit that he himself had lost his enthusiasm for jadhu.

RANO AKHIYANI - It used to be the case that many people in

these parts used jadhu. But now nobody keeps the necessary prohibitions (vidi), and fewer are practising, although jadhu is still much used by the Bhangi (sweeper caste). [5/8/81]

Dadi Zatu, who remembered with great sadness the glorious traditions of days now long past, was less optimistic about the future of jadhuwara, or indeed about the rule of dev in the lives of the Kori.

DADI ZATU - The dev used to be here, but now they have gone. It used to be the case that if you had a fever you could say to the dev, "Take it away and I will burn a lamp for you." You would then burn a lamp of ghi for the dev and your fever would disappear. There would be no need for pills or anything. But these days you may offer a whole coconut, and nothing happens. I tell you! The dev have left us and gone away. [4/6/82]

Perhaps the dev are leaving, caught as they are between the disapproval of Bhakti, the success of the doctors, and the increasing health among the Kori brought by their increasing affluence. It would be more wise, however, to suggest that they are merely performing a tactical withdrawal. Their reign might well return and their active presence is for a long time assured, for it is accepted that they would never abandon the Kori willingly.





II Shavo Bhopa sits  
before Savan in  
the Mayani madh



III Buro Bhopas Parva  
offering at the  
Akhiyani madh

IV 'Garabi players' at  
Sirah Village



## CHAPTER 6: CYCLE OF LIFE

In this chapter we will explore the main features of the Kori concept of the person, in terms of its individual and collective identity, for it is the person which is subjected to the forces of the world. Questions must be answered such as how much understanding can be gained of how an individual is conceived of and defined, and what are the various stages recognised in the life cycle of the person, and how are these stages bounded by Kori ritual? In answering these questions we will have to draw upon different areas of "belief", and their combination which culminates in the funeral rites will prove to be most interesting.

The role of the Kori women as the cohesive force which binds together the rites of the Hachmo festival has already been discussed (5.1). This is also their role in the life cycle rituals (See C.S.L.Young 1984). Where men might provide the rite's structure by making the necessary arrangements, setting the date, inviting the guests, buying the necessary foods and gifts, and constructing the physical structures necessary for the rite's performance, the women provide the content itself. They carry out the long and complicated rituals, and they build up the excitement in their anticipation of the event.

Without the womens' singing, for example, the wedding is not complete. They gather to sing on the eve of the boys naming ceremony. They sing again on the evening of his kaskala, after the initial contract for marriage has been made, and again at the habkan, when the contract is re-affirmed with gifts. When the newborn son is brought out to circle the fire at the festival of Hutani (see 6.3 below) the women sing as they carry him, and their songs, as well as the songs sung at the rites we have mentioned above, are all wedding songs.

Whilst living in Sirah Village over forty wedding songs were recorded, there being a song to accompany most of the rites performed. I once asked what the themes of the wedding songs were. The following is typical of the replies the women gave me.

The songs of the lada (groom) are happy songs, but those of the ladi (bride) are sad.

She is upset, for she has been married off.



Now, if her mother asks her to do something she may refuse, and if her father orders her to do something she need not obey. But, if her hahara (HF) gives her an order she must obey.

She is now going to be a bhabhi (eBW), and all her husband's family will cry "Bhabhi, give me food!". And she will have to obey. [16/1/81]

The trivialities expressed above can give only a small indication of the deeply traumatic experience undergone when the young girl marries, and which is reflected in the singing. The songs sung for the lada are happy, but never as popular among the womenfolk. (See Appendix II for details of the songs sung at specific rites.)

Also related to the wedding celebrations is the "play" of the drum - dancing. This can take place in the evenings of the wedding days. Dancing is much talked of throughout the long summer months, for the weddings are held in the winter, after the cash crop of cotton has been harvested. As is often the case, however, a thing which is much talked about is not so much in evidence when the time for doing it arrives. It is significant that dancing is something for men as well as women. This has probably contributed to its gradual decline in popularity. Dancing is considered to be slightly undignified, not befitting the high caste status to which the Kori aspire, and perhaps giving away a little too much of their "tribal" origins. The young still enjoy it, along with the occasional older enthusiast, if and when it is organised.

As we look at the rituals associated with the cycles of life, a recurring theme will be the ways in which they are being changed. Related to this is the manner in which the rites are perceived, and by whom, for it is invariably the men who seek to implement the changes. Before examining these rituals, however, let us first study how the individual Kori is perceived to come to be in the first place.

## I. Conception

We have already looked at Kori perceptions of life and of rebirth, finding that these are based on their concept of the ziv, the life force of the individual. The ziv manifests itself physically in the form of breath. The body, however, does not just wait around, formed but lifeless, for the ziv to appear and inhabit it. It must undergo conception, and be born. It is at this point that what to us has so far appeared to be a well-defined concept may become blurred and confused.

BURO MAYANI - It is from the woman that the child is formed, but first she must take the strength of the man.

SHAVO BHOPA - A man must give his zivar - the word "ziv" comes from zivar. A man's ziv lies behind his forehead, and from there it travels down and "into the woman". That is why his sons look like him and his daughters look like the mother.

BURO MAYANI - Yet, you must have life from both to form the child. The man's strength mixes with the blood of the woman and, by Ishvar's will, a ball forms from which the child grows. But it grows from the blood of the woman. That is why women are weak compared to men. It is from their blood, their flesh, and their skin that the child is formed. [1/9/81]

We see here a shift from the concept of the ziv as breath to it being identified with semen. Yet semen is not the man's ziv, although it is of it.

HADHU VEAN - Semen is the seed from which children come into being. It is stored in the head. [6/5/82]

Semen is also identified with strength.

DADI ZATI - Buro (Mayani) has no strength. That is his trouble (she pointed to her head). It is because he smokes cannabis. It is the same with Bozo (Akhiyani - another childless man). He has no strength.

JNY - Can it not be that there is something wrong with the women?

DADI ZATI - No, it is not the wrong of the woman. If you plough the field, plant seed and tend it, will it not grow? When will it ever not grow? So, you see, it is not the wrong of the woman, but the wrong is in the man (again she pointed to her head). [4/3/82]

Similar ideas were echoed by Nani in another conversation.

NANI - It must have been the fault of the man. It is always the man, for does not even soil which is salty eventually render up what has been sown there? [11/2/82]

It would appear that, whereas both men and women have life in the form of breath, only men have the ability to pass this on to the child in the form of the semen, which is the seed sown inside the woman. The existence of the zach, the patrilineal descent group, supports this. Women, nevertheless, contribute to the development of the child by providing the substance from which the body which houses the ziv is formed. Thus they lose their strength to the child, whereas it is by the strength of the father that the child's conception is made possible. Theories about conception abound in Indian ethnographies. In Bengal, for example, both parents are seen to contribute to the formation of the child, although its sex will depend upon the relative amounts of semen and uterine blood present in the womb (Inden & Nicholas 1977:52). In Sri Lanka, by way of contrast, McGilvray (1982b:50) finds that, while conception is bilateral, there is no notion of the male/seed female/field analogy which is in evidence in Northern India. McGilvray also finds that the "Wind of Life" is present at conception (see 4.1), although not contributed by either parent. His ethnography does echo the Kori notion that the strength of the woman is lost to her child, for the Mukkavar see the woman's strength stored in her uterine blood, which is lost at menstruation. The strength of men, by comparison, is stored in their semen.

So far a major force in the equation has only been mentioned once.

DADI ZATI - Children come at the will of Ishvar, and if there are none in your bhag (she pointed to her head), then how can any begin? [10/5/82]

By acknowledging the overall government of Ishvar and the mysteries of His power, the explanation is complete. In the act of conception the life cycle of the individual undergoing rebirth is linked to the life cycle of the group, the zach. The father supplies life, but by Ishvar's will only. The word "bhag" has two related meanings. A bhag is an orchard, but it is also one's destiny, bearing the fruit of one's life. One's destiny is linked to the will of Ishvar and to past lives. One's fruit, in the form of one's children, are also determined by Ishvar for, according to one's

merits in previous lives, Ishvar is able to determine the nature of one's life to come. As orchard in this context is synonymous with destiny, so fruit is synonymous with rewards (see Jari's picture - 3.1,V.).

## II. Birth

The mother gives birth on the floor of the family house, assisted by those local older women who have the necessary expertise. The afterbirth is buried beside the hearth, and the baby lies there on the ground beside its mother for the first few days of its life. The degree of ritual undergone by the newborn child depends entirely upon its sex. The boy is accorded more attention.

NENA (s/o Buro Mayani) - Many women have two children at one time. Sometimes it is two girls, and sometimes two boys. If it is two boys, then there is much celebration. If two girls, then they are just given names, and that is all. If it is a boy and a girl, then the girl is left sleeping on the bed while the boy goes through sathi (the naming ceremony), and is fussed over. [1/9/81]

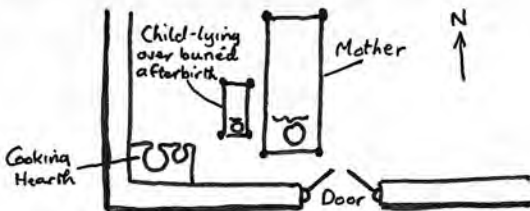
In the light of our discussion about conception, it is possible to see a further dimension in the disparity between the treatment accorded to children of different sexes. It is undeniable that, as is the case in many patrilineal societies, the boy is valued because of the promise of a future he represents for the household. He will add prestige to the household, strength to its working capacity and, with time, bring home a wife to serve his mother and to bear more sons. The girl, by contrast, will be brought up to be lost in marriage. Such notions are often heard voiced.

We have seen, also, that it is through the semen of the man that life is passed on from one generation to another. The man, then, ensures the continuity of the group as a whole, and is the symbol of its continued well-being and growth. We have already seen, and will continue to see in the life cycle events described below, that such rites are not merely carried out for the sake of the individuals upon which they focus attention. They are corporate acts in which the son, or the bride and bridegroom have parts to play. In all these events the symbol of the bridegroom is ever-present, the man adding to the strength of the group through marriage. The bridegroom theme is found woven into the rites of birth, marriage, and death.

The newborn boy, then, is not just welcomed because he will contribute as an individual to the well-being of the group. He is welcomed because, by becoming a link in the chain of succession, he is ensuring the continued life of the group. His life cycle rites do not simply celebrate the stages in his life, they celebrate the life cycle of the group as a whole. The most important of these rites, therefore, is the marriage rite, and echoes of the marriage will be found in the other rites also.

### III. Naming

From the time of his birth until his sathi (naming), the boy lies with his feet to the north. The following pattern, recorded after Mali (w/o Arjan Akhiyani) had given birth, was



the norm. Mali had to maintain this direction and position, despite the cold draft from the door, from birth until sathi.

JNY - Why can the woman who has just given birth not sleep on the bed?

NANI - It is the ruling of our ancestors; the ruling of Ishvar. Before she can sleep on a bed again she must first buy one and a quarter rupees worth of sweets and share them among the children. [21/1/81]

NENA (Mayani) - After six days, if it is a boy, we have sathi ("sixth"), and he has a name put on him. [1/9/81]

The girl is simply given a name, and does not undergo any individual or specific life cycle rite until her marriage, which necessitates her involvement with the bridegroom.

What follows is a description of the sathi performed, in this case, for Satruga Bhagat's son's son.

Jari was in charge of the proceedings, which were conducted by the women while the men celebrated at a distance. There was much bustle at dusk as children from all the households of the village came with handfuls of grain. These were later to be repaid with boiled sweet grain - tota -



the delicacy served at this particular event. The mother remained indoors and out of sight.

The baby lay on folded quilts atop a small cot in the shelter of the uthak. His feet were to the north. One at a time Jari took the broad leaves of a gidura tree and, with her finger, made as if she was writing upon them, and chanted a formula (see below). A different formula was chanted for each leaf, which was then filled with tota and raw sugar and placed on one of each of the four corners of the cot. The fifth leaf was placed underneath the cot. More leaves were then filled and given to children from various households.

A large metal spoon was then filled with ghi. A cotton wick was placed in it, and lit, and it was carried into the house by Ratani (Akhiyani), the child's father's "sister", who was also playing a large part in the proceedings.

Meanwhile the child's mother was called for. She came out of the house with a winnower of grain and bowed at her son's feet. Then she tossed the grain over the cot four times, and cracked her knuckles against the sides of her head.

(The salute performed by the child's mother is of special significance. It is performed by her, or her representative, throughout the marriage ceremonies and on other occasions in the life cycle of both male and female Kori. It signifies their special status on such occasions. There are essentially six ingredients involved in the salute: the winnower - winnowing basket, a brass lota of water, four dates, grain, and ghi. The water is poured to the left and right of the person saluted. The dates are then circled over their head and tossed in all four directions. The ghi is planted in the centre of their forehead. The grain is then tossed four times over them. Finally the mother cracks her knuckles against the side of her own head. According to the Freeds - 1980:373 - this symbolically transfers their troubles on to her own head.)

Jari then lifted her brass plate and banged on its side while all the children, who had been waiting expectantly for this moment, shouted out "Radhu kapilo!" several times. (Radhu was the name given to the boy.) There was a pause, and then Jari banged again and the children answered with their shout, banging their own plates too. The shout was given four times, after which everyone was fed sweet rice, and the children sent home with their plates filled with tota. (see also Freed & Freed 1980:365). [4/8/81]

The sathi held for the son of Arjan Adi'hra was similar in detail to the one above.

As dusk approached things were beginning to get busy. Guests were arriving and being plied with drinks. Meanwhile the naming ceremony was carried out. Totha was given to the children, and the phu'i (FZ) was given the spoon with the lamp of ghi. She went into the house, lifted her leg, and poured the ghi, with the spoon extended through her legs, down the wall of the house, thus dousing the flame.

The women were to gather later to sing four ritual wedding songs.

So much for the ritual. Now for some of the explanations.

GOMI (z/o Lakshman Adi'hra) - The five leaves are needed for the writing of the name. You also need tota as you name with tota. [30/1/82]

JNY - Why tota?

DADI ZATU - Oh, just as a celebration. (After some further encouragement..) Well, It used to be the case, in the earlier days when our parents were poor and they wished to celebrate, that they could not afford wheat pudding or rice so they cooked up tota and the children were happy. So, these days the custom is continued. [30/1/82]

Let us return, then, to the names which were "written down".

DADI ZATI - At sathi the names taken are those of the hak. (The hak when used in the kinship sense is an old term falling into disuse. It referred to those zach which shared the village with the zach of ego's ancestors in the days when the Kori lived a settled life in Katch.) [6/6/82]

This does not find support when its sathi ceremony is contrasted with that of another zach, however.

JNY - Could you explain for me the use of the names at the sathi of Satruga's grandson?

JARI - There are five names written. One is that of the father (or grandfather). One is that of Dadu Dharbar, who is an important man in this locality. One is that of the kotwar. One is that of Ramzi, the zamai (WH). The last is that of Zivan the Meghvar (leather-worker), who comes sometimes to plant onions. His leaf is placed underneath the baby's bottom.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - (Chuckling) Is it indeed! This is the first time I have heard of this. [6/3/82]

JNY - What were the names written on the five leaves at Arjan's son's sathi?

GOMI (z/o Lakshman Adi'hra) - One was that of Arjan Adih'ra. One was that of Rama Patel Akhiyani. One was that of Nilo Kotwar. And one of Ramshi Varesa. The one underneath was for the Meghvar, because they are a low caste. [30/1/82]

Here we see the names "written" at an Akhiyani sathi in contrast to an Adi'hra one. Both show the same pattern. Names taken are those of the father or grandfather, the local leader, the village kotwar, a male affine,

and a lower caste. These names appear to relate more to the current village than to the villages of old in Katch. They represent five necessary components in the village structure (e.g. both Ramzi and Ramshi were resident in Sirah).

Once used for the ceremony, the leaves containing the food are given to the households named.

DADI ZATI - The Meghvar's leaf is thrown out. No-one eats it, unless there is a Mehvar who it can be given to. [16/3/82]

What, then, of the pouring of the spoonful of ghi?

DADI ZATI - The ghi shows, by the number of trickles it makes down the wall, how many more sons will be born. It can be poured anywhere: on a trunk or simply down the wall. The boy's phu'i (FZ) does this. If she is unavailable then it is done by a daughter of the house. [30/1/82]

Sathi is clearly and inevitably a corporate rite, creating a human out of a newborn by giving him a group identity. The children are the first to shout the name, the local villagers are the first to share in the celebrations. The rite looks forward to the further strengthening of the zach through more sons to come, but this is not all, for it also looks forward to the most important rite in the life of the newborn as it is the beginning of the celebrations of marriage.

For example, there is the direction in which the newborn son lies.

DADI ZATU - North is the direction the lada (bridegroom) faces when he is being dressed for his wedding, and when he is sitting in the mandua (wedding pavilion). And so we face the baby boy that way because we say he is a lada. The songs we sing at his sathi are the same as the ones we sing at his kaskala (engagement), and his habkan (engagement celebration). [30/1/82]

For the sathi ceremony the son is dressed in a green sheet with a green head cloth. Indeed, green is the most popular colour of the clothes of all children for the first few months of their lives.

GOMI (z/o Lakshman Adi'hra) The boy has a green shirt and head cloth - the colours of the lada. At sathi he is dressed for the first time. [30/1/82]

From his birth to his death the male Kori, when passing through the sequence of rites which mark the stages of his life, will always be

referred to as the lada, the bridegroom.

DADI ZATI - "Lada" means bridegroom. When a boy is born we think ahead to his yiva (wedding) and call him lada. When a man dies we remember his married status and call him lada. [1/6/82]

After naming, the individual baby becomes a part of the corporate group. A relationship is recognised between the ziv of the individual and the life of the group. The individual's ziv becomes a group responsibility.

NENA (z/o Buro Mayani) - Zomi had four children and they all died straight away. When that happens we do not give them a burial. All that we do is dig a hole around at the back of the village, wrap the body in a cloth, and bury it. If the child has been named, then it is given a proper burial. [1/9/81]

At sathi a change occurs. The reborn ziv, which up until that time has been propelled by the merits and demerits of its previous life, receives the cushioning of the patrilineage of which it is now a part, for, as we shall see in our examination of funeral rites below, a chief purpose of the funeral is to earn dharam for the deceased relative's ziv. The zach has been strengthened and its life cycle has gathered momentum, but it has obligations to the individual in return. If a child dies after it has been named then the zach must accept responsibility for earning it dharam.

#### IV. The Presentation of the Soti

At the sathi rite, the father makes an offering of lepzi (wheat and raw sugar) to the zach mata. This is a preliminary rite for that which binds the son directly to the mata through the presentation of his soti. This takes place at the festival of Parwa. (See 5.2, 5.3 for full details of this rite.) How soon the son is presented to the mata appears to depend on the circumstance of the household, for it is not just the hairlock which must be given.

DADI ZATI - For his son the father must sacrifice a male kid goat at his zach madh and present a lock of the boy's hair. Radhu and Dharmu (Akhiyani), for example, have done this for their sons. Dharmu did it only last year. Karam (their younger brother) has not done so yet. Perhaps this year. [29/9/81]

Zomi, after five daughters, and several stillborn sons, eventually gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, and the boy survived. This, their only son, was much looked after and watched over. Yet, it was not until he was over three years old that Ramshi, his father, was prepared to take him to his zach mata. Ramshi was somewhat troubled at the time, as he had recently had his son baptised as a Christian. He explained his actions to me thus.

RAMSHI VARESA - Yes, my son has been baptised, but you see he is not yet a pakka (proper) Christian. When he drinks from the cup he will become pakka. Until then he must be protected against ghosts, and so his soti must be presented to the mata. When he understands more himself, he will leave the mata of his own free will and become a Christian. Did I not have my soti given? And did I not leave my mata? [28/10/81]

Ramshi's actual disloyalty to his mata was always in doubt anyway, but his reasoning does indicate the role which the mata plays in the life of the growing zach member. The mata has responsibility for the zach, and the zach for the mata. (It is interesting to note that in Southern Gujarat the Patidar, who have no zach mata, present their hairlocks to their caste mata - Pocock 1973:67. In Uttar Pradesh, by way of contrast, the Freeds - 1980:369 - find that the ceremony of the first hairlock is now largely neglected.) The zach madh accumulates symbols of the life cycles of its members: the soti of its sons, and the symbols of their marriage, which are presented after the wedding itself.

BURO BHOPA - The madh trunks contain the lengths of red and white cloth (given with the soti at Parwa). When there is a wedding, the cloth worn over the head of the bride and attached to the groom is also placed in the trunk. [2/10/81]

Also to be found in these trunks are the moriya, the crowns worn by the bridegroom. This attachment of the mata to the artifacts of marriage makes her lack of participation in the wedding rites themselves, from the day the date is set to the day after the groom has returned with the bride to his village, all the more remarkable.



The Kori marriage rite, the viva, is the most talked of, most eagerly awaited, and most elaborate of their ritual sequences. It involves the most dancing, singing, feasting, rejoicing, and sorrowing. The elaborate exchanges involved in the bringing together of two kin groups through the marriage of their offspring are begun several years before the event and continue into the lives of future generations.

### I. Kinship and Marriage

First, let us very briefly look at Kori kinship. The Kori classify kin along cognatic lines, tracing relationships through both the male and the female line. Marriage is prohibited with cognatic kin. Kin terms encompass all the individuals within a person's zach (patrilineage), and all zach have at least three other zach, known as the hak, (branches), with whom they share their village of origin and zach mata, and to whom are extended kinship terms of classification. (The hak relationship arises from their days in Kutch, when they practised village exogamy.) The existence of the rule prohibiting marriage with cognates, coupled with the extension of the cognatic relationship to the zach, and even the hak, of the individual concerned, should ideally render all Kori unmarriageable within the space of a few generations.

This difficulty is, however, avoided in a manner which simply, but adequately, demonstrates the way the practice can supercede the theory. For marriages do take place despite it. Those who are marriageable are defined as such, not by the absence of any cognatic tie, but through their own cognatic links with those who have already married into ego's cognatic group, other than his/her direct ascendants (e.g., FZHZS/D - where marriageability is sanctioned by the FZ/FZH marriage; FBWBS/D; MBWZS/D; MZHZS/D; etc.). To question their marriageability would be to question the validity of these marriages, and this in turn would threaten the validity of the past marriages which had sanctioned these marriages, and so on.

Kori society can be egocentrically divided into those who are termed vevai (from the Sanskrit: "veivahika" - Pocock 1972:102) and are

marriageable, and those who are kin and are unmarriageable. As kin are defined from generation to generation, so vevai are defined from marriage to marriage. Logic may cause theoretical problems, but practice denies their existence. (Mayer - 1960:203/4 - notes a similar practice among the middle order castes of Central India, where marriage is prohibited with ones FZD on account of shared blood, but is possible with the rest of her clan.)

From the child's early age their family searches for a suitable marriage partner for them. Help is sought from those related through marriage who are asked to look among their relatives for someone suitable and then to act as intermediaries in the proceedings. Once a match is made, visits are made by elder males from both sides to assess the merits of the union, for the individuals involved and for their families. Finally, the boy's father will symbolically offer the girl's father a five rupee note. By accepting it the latter enters into a formal relationship with the former which encompasses both parties.

This initial engagement (kaskala) is followed by further, more elaborate exchanges between the two groups in the months or years leading up to the actual wedding. These serve to acquaint the families with each other and to cement their relationship.

## II. The Lagan

When both families are agreed that the year of the wedding has come - this will depend on the age of those to be married and on how well off the families themselves are - they will meet to make the necessary arrangements. An examination of the astrological charts determines the date and time of the marriage ritual and all the rituals associated with it. These are written down on a piece of paper which is the lagan (see also Freed & Freed 1980:423).

DADI ZATU - When you have a lagan looked up, the man looks at his chart and tells you three things: the day, the time, and the number of days that Ganesh is to be seated. This can be 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, up to 25, and for even longer, but not for 3 or less. All this information is written on a piece of paper. A four anna (1/4 rupee) piece is wrapped up in this and it is tied with a piece of yellow string.

This is the lagan. It is kept by the ladi's mother. When, after the viva, the ladi is being taken away, a one rupee note is added to the four anna piece and tied up in the shawl which her parents give her away with her. On the way, her hahu (HM) takes this money and buys biscuits for all the women singers to eat. [14/12/81]

The procedure followed by Ramshi Varesa when he had the lagan written for the marriage of his second daughter, Homi, was very much in keeping with what is said above. The event was shared by many of the village men, who were invited to accompany him, and he made use of Bharat's tractor-trailer for this purpose.

RAMSHI VARESA - There was a Brahman (often a title confused with one who performs the duties of a Brahman) in Tando Ala Yar who looked up lagan for people in the area. This is done at a (Hindu) sweet meat shop. The Brahman was paid twenty rupees each by both parties, and then all were fed sweet meats. I spent one hundred rupees on sweetmeats. We also brought some home for the women who come to sing in the evening. [4/1/82]

On its arrival at the ladi's village, the lagan is greeted "in person" by a male member of her household accompanied by a procession of singing women, and taken to her home.

Although the procedure followed by Ramshi was in keeping with descriptions in the songs (see Appendix II), a different procedure which we witnessed indicated the relaxed nature of the tradition surrounding the event in Sirah Village. When the lagan of Mali (D/O Lakshman Adi'hra) was looked up, the services of a visiting bhagat, Devi Dah, were called upon so as to save the journey to town.

Devi Dah was fetched from the house of Satruga Bhagat where he had been staying the night. He was brought to the house of Arjan Adi'hra. With him he brought his almanac (tipani) and a notebook, all wrapped up in a cloth bag.

Having been seated upon piled quilts, with the two parties concerned seated on either side, heads covered in respect, Devi Dah consulted the almanac. He enquired as to the names of the lada and ladi, for they affected his calculations, and eventually he came up with a date. Then, borrowing a sheet of plain paper, he drew out a chart. This was the lagan. It was tied up with yellow thread to form a packet, with a four anna piece wrapped inside. Tea was served and everyone chatted (see Plate VIII.).

In the evening the women came from the house of Mama Sahadeva (Mali's adopted guardian) to collect the lagan. Mami carried the winnower of grain with ghi, and Nilo Adi'hra delivered the lagan to her. It was annointed and ceremonially saluted, then placed on the winnower. Singing they had come, and singing the women returned to Mama's house where

that night they sang four more songs in their wailing, rhythm-less voices.  
[12/12/80]

After Mali's viva was over I examined her lagan (see end of chapter). The chart was a mixture of writing, other symbols, and figures. The writing and figures indicated the date and time in the three separate calendars used in Sind - Muslim, Hindu, and Christian. Of the symbols I could make no sense. Nor could the literate whom I consulted enlighten me.

Devi Dah, who was often called upon to look up lagan, took his duties very seriously. A year after looking up Mali's lagan, he was again asked to look up that of her younger sister, Ganga. It was found by him that there were no auspicious dates on which she could be married in that month, and few in the next. Eventually the date was set for the month of Ma, the last month of the cold season.

Once his service had been performed, Devi Dah went on to relate the following to the semi-respectful gathering.

DEVI DAH - I once happened to be visiting a village where, three days earlier, the lagan of one of the villager's sons had been set by a so-called Brahman who was resident there. Naturally, I was interested in the date, being related to the party in question. I was also a bit suspicious of this man who was claiming to be skilled in such matters. I asked to see his tipani (almanac). Three times I asked him to bring them to me and, after offering many excuses, he eventually produced them.

"My man!", I said. "These are three years out of date."

The boy's father was beside himself with worry. He did not know what to do, for the date had been fixed, and now it was discovered that the lagan was false.

"Do not worry!", I cried. "Come and sit here on my right! I shall bind your lagan for you." And bind it I did. Then I said, "Now go, and show that to whoever you wish to, be he a Brahman, or a great pandit (scholar). He will say that this lagan is true. For I am able to look up lagan, and I make no mistakes."

Look at what this man was doing, taking advantage of my people, who are poor and illiterate. In fact, little more was seen of the man, and he soon left the village altogether.  
[28/11/81]

Whether looked up at the shop of the astrologer, or by the visiting scholar with his own charts, the lagan provides the vital temporal grid for



the viva ritual. In a sense it links the rites with those of Hindus in India, and with the written traditions of Hinduism, thereby providing an orthodox sanction for the marriage union.

Once the lagan has been looked up, it is the task of both parties to invite their respective guests. Wedding guests contribute to the expenses in a system of exchange wherein the sums given are recorded and must be returned with interest. It is important, therefore, to invite households to which money has been paid at past weddings, and also to attract others who may initiate an exchange relationship with a handsome donation. Money-giving at weddings, however, is a mixed blessing, for what has been received must be returned again in the future.

Defaulting in the payment of a viva debt is seldom heard of, for this would cut that household off from financial security should they ever wish to marry a dependant.

### III. The Seating of Ganesh

The viva rites, from start to finish, are presided over by Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Shiva. Ganesh is the remover of obstacles according to the orthodox Hindu traditions. Buro Mayani once explained the importance of Ganesh in general, without any reference to the viva rites. I find this explanation gives some insight into why the two are connected.

BURO MAYANI - If you ever go on a long journey, you must first think of Ganesh, and then think of him again when you return. He will keep you safe on your travels. [28/10/81]

It would be very tempting to draw on the analogy of the journey when examining the viva ritual: the major rite of passage in Kori society. We shall return to this theme below. There can be no doubt as to the importance of the presence of Ganesh throughout the viva ritual sequence, however.

RANO AKHIYANI - In times now past, times of truth, Ganesh was worshipped for the duration of the wedding festivities. In return he would protect the lada or ladi. No illness would befall them, nor would they be troubled by ghosts. The protection of Ganesh would continue until the time when, after the viva he was taken outside the village and abandoned. Now we live in an age of falsehood, but we continue this tradition. [27/1/82]



Ganesh is not only the protector, but also the one who sanctions the viva.

BURO BHOPA - Ganesh is the lord of the viva. We must seat (enthroned) Ganesh or the viva will not be able to take place. Unless Ganesh has been seated the couple would be regarded as elopers. [23/10/81]

We saw above (6.2,II.) how Ganesh was seated for an odd number of days, as had been ordained by the astrologer. These days culminate in the rite of marriage. Ganesh is seated in the house where the lada or ladi sleeps, and lamps of ghi are burned to him twice daily in offering. The lada/ladi, who is in his keeping, can at no time sit on a chair, bed, or raised platform for the duration of this period, and must sleep on the floor beside Ganesh. For Ganesh himself is seated on the floor, and they must not sit "above" him.

For this whole period no offerings can be made to any other deity by that hamlet. Bhopi Zati explained why.

BHOPI ZATI - Once Ganesh has been seated, then no other offering can be made. If he is seated, then any such offering would be a waste of time, for Dada (FF) Ganesh says, "Let no-one receive before me!" [3/3/82]

Also, during this period, the lada/ladi are not permitted to do anything which might be considered to be work. They spend their time at home, or wandering the village, but never too far afield. They are given a supply of betel nut and spices to chew and to share with the many of their fellow villagers who jokingly demand some of them.

The green clothing, which predominates in the wedding rites, as well as those of birth, can also be traced to Ganesh.

BURO MAYANI - At the viva green is the predominant colour because it is green which is worn by Ganesh. Green must be held over the heads of the women folk whenever their rites are performed. [25/2/82]

While sitting before Ganesh, the lada/ladi are not allowed to bathe. Instead they rub a yellow mixture, known as piti, into their skin each day.

JARI - There are three things in piti: turmeric, moong flour (yellow), and sesame oil.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - Piti is done so that the lada or ladi will become fair-skinned, and also to remove dirt. [22/2/82]

Ganesh is seated on the evening of the first day, beginning the countdown to the wedding night. That afternoon the womenfolk gather in the hamlet of the lada/ladi to make lolra. These are balls of kneaded dough which are pressed into the mould of the palm and closed fingers of the hand. In the evening these are boiled up in a large pot and then cooked in a mixture of ghi and raw sugar, and eaten while hot. Young boys are sent out to invite other Kori from nearby villages, and close relatives from afar, to help. There is enough lolra for everyone.

The first shape to be made from the dough is human in form.

DADI ZATI - This figure is always made first before the other lolra. Whoever gets it eats it. It is given to no special person. The first plate of cooked lolra, however, is taken and placed in front of Ganesh. Later on it is eaten by the women who will come that evening to sing. [29/12/81]

Lolra are cooked in India on Ganesh's annual festival, Vinayakar Chathurthi in August/September (Good 1985 - personal communication). The eating of the sweet, rich, lolra can, however, be associated with things other than Ganesh, although perhaps even here there may be a connection. The following occurred in a conversation held in a jovial atmosphere one evening at the house of Buro Mayani. I had explained that, as we follow a different dharam in Scotland, we did not worship Ganesh at our weddings.

BURO MAYANI - But, if you were to seat Ganesh and eat all the sweet things that we give to the lada in the days leading up to the viva, then you would have enough strength to marry two, four, five brides. [19/10/81]

This comment caused much back-slapping and amusement, it being a play on the notion that the strength of sweet foods contributes to one's virility.

At sunset, before the guests are fed lolra, the effigy of Ganesh is brought in procession to the house of the lada/ladi from the house of the woman who has made it. It is made from clay, is pyramidal, decorated in sequins, and cloaked in green, being about ten inches high. Various of the Sirah women had a reputation for being able to model a ganesh. One such woman was Baya, wife of Viro Paji.

ZAKAL - You see, Baya was the "potter". If there is no real potter (i.e. one of the potter caste) to make Ganesh, then you get a village woman to do it. And you cannot leave her empty-handed. So the sugar is given with ghi for her to mix

with rotlo and eat, or to make wheat pudding, or do whatever she likes with it. [13/1/82]

#### IV. The Pahli

Throughout their period of sitting with Ganesh, the lada/ladi are called upon by other village households, to receive offerings on Ganesh's behalf. These offerings are placed in the cupped hands of the lada/ladi, and are called "the filling of the pahli (palms)". These offerings, as is the case with wedding payments, are made on a reciprocal basis from wedding to wedding, although they are not as obligatory.

ZAKAL - The pahli is filled with grain, sweets, and money. The grain is placed in the house, and a handful is tossed outside. We have had twenty rupees given so far. [18/1/82]

The very first pahli is offered by the lada/ladi's own household, and is the most significant. This rite takes place the morning after the seating (enthronement) of Ganesh. The tone of the rite varies tremendously, depending upon whether the person involved is a lada or a ladi. If it is a lada, this is a time of frivolity. If it is a ladi, however, it is a time of sorrow, matched only by the wedding itself.

For the women, the sad rites of the wedding were always the most enjoyed, and the most talked of amongst themselves. The merits of the ladi are judged by how well she cried.

NANI - The first pahli is filled by the ladi's parents. They cry because they are losing a daughter.

DADI ZATI - But people also will cry because they will recall all their relatives who have died and therefore will not be present to take part in the viva rites and celebrations. [29/12/81]

The first pahli could be seen as the ritual which affirms the separation between parent and lada/lada with the seating of Ganesh. When the viva is over, the lada will be returned to his parents with a wife, but the ladi will have been taken away to serve another man's parents. For the former the first pahli is the beginning of a celebration. For the latter it is the beginning of a loss.

In addition to filling their pahli, village households also each provide a meal for the lada/ladi. This is known as the "giving of vanora". The lada/ladi, and their retainers - relatives of their generation - are fed luxury foods, such as fish and vermicelli, and are sent home with money in their hands and handfuls of grain to scatter on their way, giving what remains to Ganesh. Vanora is also given by village households on a reciprocal principle.

## V. The Zanotoro

As the wife is taken taken by the lada's parents to live with them, his party, the "zan", must first gather at his village before the expedition can set out. Guests arrive on the evening of the day before the day of the actual viva. The zan is composed of representatives from all the households related cognatically to the lada. They come to give support to the family in question, and to pay towards the expenses which in return for similar payments made to them in the past.

Just before dusk, while the guests are still arriving, the gothiro is "lifted" in the lada's village. It is lifted by a younger brother or cousin of the lada, from his zach.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - The gothiro consists of a small clay pot filled with water. A lota of water is placed on top of this, and a length of reed sticks out of the top. Over this is draped a green cloth.

The women sing in procession with it, first to the house of the hamlet elder, and then to the village entrance. They then return to the house of the lada where the boy refuses to put it down until the lada's father promises him a watch, a set of silver buttons, or a suit of clothes. The longer he holds it up, the more fun is made of the man of that house (father).  
[20/2/82]

The gothiro is also lifted in the ladi's village the following evening.

The zanotoro, which is held in the lada's village on the night before the viva, is a time of great festivity. Traditionally a goat is killed, and there is much to drink. It contrasts greatly with the viva itself, where sweet, or vegetarian foods are served, and where revelry is replaced by politeness and reserve, and where the womenfolk play a large part in the

JNY - Why is sweet rice provided at the viva, but meat at the zanotoro?

KARAM MAYANI - At the viva you must serve what you can. If you can only afford a little, then a little will suffice, but at least a little sweet food has to be served. And the guests should then be fed on whatever you can give them. It is a matter of peace (shanti).

At the zanotoro it is a time of happiness (kushi), and so meat is provided. [25/2/82]

Here we see the happiness of the zanotoro contrasting with the peace which is necessary for the viva itself. At the viva the hosts are suffering the loss of their daughter, and it is well for the zan not to forget this and to strive for peace and reconciliation. Indeed, as we shall see below, any jollity which occurs is at the zan's expense.

In the morning the guests are fed again, and those who would go no further make their wedding payment to their host and go home, or remain in the village. Those who would accompany the groom - close relatives, men and women, and fellow villagers - make ready to depart.

The lada bathes, his first bath since the seating of Ganesh, and puts on his special wedding garments. Once ready, he and his retainers head the procession of singing women to the entrance of the village, green shawl held aloft.

On the zan's arrival at the ladi's village, the lada's procession forms up again, and he is marched to his quarters for the night. Throughout the night of his viva the lada and his aides remain with the women who have accompanied him. The menfolk are housed separately and spend the night playing cards and being entertained. The women are in charge of the rituals. During the night they pile wood high on their fire and sing their songs. They are the guests in the village. They have to rely on the goodwill of their hosts, whose daughter they have come to take away.

Songs are sung to counter those of the ladi's womenfolk, who are bent on denigrating the zan, as we shall see below. From the morning when he has his bath to the evening of the following day when he returns with his ladi, the lada is not allowed to speak except to his aides. During the early part of the evening at the ladi's village, her fellow villagers will



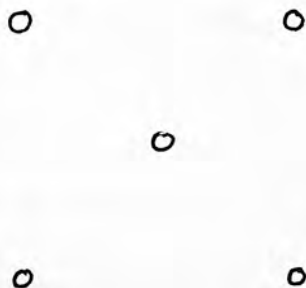
drop in to "view the lada", mischievously trying to get him to speak out loud with their abrupt questions. Throughout the night the lada is then visited by various representatives from the ladi's village. Before these are discussed, however, let us return to the activities which take place in the ladi's village on the morning before the viva.

## VI. The Setting Up of the Mandua

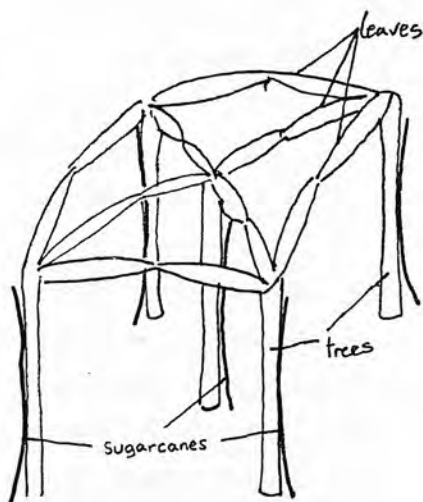
The rite where the ladi and lada are actually brought together on the night of the viva is known as the "phera", the "circling" of the wedding fire. This takes place in the wedding pavilion, the "mandua", which has to be constructed on the morning of the wedding. In the case of Ganga's wedding, the seven banana trees used to construct the mandua had been chopped the previous evening and left at the village entrance in their ox-cart.

The village men were gathered together and given tea at Lakshman Adi'hra's house. Then they set to work digging five holes in the clearing in front of his house, four forming a square facing in the four cardinal directions, and one in its centre, the square being approximately two metres in width.

The women were then sent off in procession to "salute" the trees so that they could be brought into the village. They were lead by Zakal, Ganga's mother, carrying a winnower of rice, four dates, and two cups of ghi and raw sugar. She ritually saluted the uppermost of the trees with these. The cups were given to some of the men (the suppliers of the trees) who were standing waiting. They drank the ghi and ate the raw sugar with much jollity. The women then lead the way, singing, as the men brought in the trees, and the mandua was constructed.



plan of the Mandua Pillars



The banana trees were planted in the five holes and a stick of sugar-cane strapped to each. The branches of the trees were then tied together and some dried branches of the kipro bush were pushed into them to form a roof of sorts. The whole construct was then decorated with newspapers and coloured crepe paper. While the mandua was being constructed by the young men, the womenfolk sat nearby on the north side and sang songs echoing the themes of bright decorations, and of the need for relatives to be party to the proceedings.

When all had been set up, Zakal approached with her winnower and saluted the central pillar of the mandua on its north side. Then Lavi Dungarani, who had been helping in the construction, was given a winnower laden with dates. From this he tossed four handfuls over the mandua, and children scrabbled for them as they fell to the ground. The rest were distributed to all present. Finally a path from the mandua to the door of the ladi's house was marked out and decorated.

The remaining two banana trees were planted at the entrance to the village, forming the pillars of a gate, the torani. The tops of these pillars were linked together with a string, bearing mango leaves. [3/2/82]

If there are several marriages taking place on the same night, then one mandua will not suffice for them. Dadi Zatu once told of how two other weddings had occurred on the same night as that of Buro Mayani.

DADI ZATU - There were three mandua. They were planted in a row, east-west, over where Mothi now keeps his oxen.

JNY - Can they not be shared?

DADI ZATU - No! Each family must have its own thamb (pillar). [4/3/82]

After the viva is over and the ladi has been taken away, the four outer pillars are chopped down. But the central one remains standing.

NILO ADI'HRA - The thamb is left standing until the ladi is brought back to see her parents again. It reminds her parents of their loss [3/2/82]

## VII. The Manik Thamb

That this pillar reminds the parents of their loss, there can be no doubt. The meaning embodied in the thamb is more complex, however, for, at the same time that the mandua is being erected, a separate pillar, the "manik thamb", is being planted at the door of the ladi's house by her ZH, or her FZH.

The manik thamb (see Plate V.) was a wooden stake, planted in an upright position. The top of the stake is split twice at right-angles. A four anna peice is placed into this and on top of this is driven a small bound cross of bamboo. The top is then daubed with a dark red dye. (The manik thamb is also planted outside the house of the lada on the afternoon of his zanotoro.)

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - The manik thamb is the great thamb. It is said to be greater than those of the mandua. When guests come and see it then they know that that is the house where the ladi is. [20/2/82]

While this is perfectly plausible, other meanings were also unearthed, however, and more in the grins and chuckles of those who spoke than in what they said.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - (brief chuckle) .. The manik thamb is necessary for the viva. If there is no manik thamb, then people will say that the viva has not fully taken place, and will mock their hosts. [22/2/82]

Here we see hinted that the manik thamb symbolises the ladi's loss of virginity, and the consummation of the marriage. This thamb must be planted by male affines, those who have, in the past, married daughters of the zach.

DADI ZATI - The manik thamb is Ganesh's. We plant it for Ganesh.

JNY - Is it connected with the Lingam, the sign of Mahadev (Shiva)?

DADI ZATI - I have seen pictures of the Lingam, and of Ganesh. Perhaps that is its meaning.. But I do not really know. [1/6/82]

JNY - Is the manik thamb one and the same as the Lingam of Shiva?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - (Jari had giggled at its mention) .. No! No! All that the thamb is is a sign that there is a viva. It is only there for two or three days, after which it is removed. It has nothing to do with Mahadev.

JARI - It is just a bit of wood that has five dates placed in it and is buried in the ground. [6/3/82]

This was where my investigation of the manik thamb ended. Unlike many of the other rites and symbols of the viva, this thamb is something of which no real issue is made. We could assume that this is not because it is unimportant, for that it certainly is not, but because it is improper to speak of it in the way that other parts of the viva are spoken. Just as it is often improper to dwell on defecation, although it is as important a bodily function as is eating, so it is improper to draw attention to this symbol of the consummation of the marriage, although this is as relevant as the joining of the two kin groups.

(Freed & Freed - 1980:462 - also comment on the mandap erected at both the bride and the grooms village but separate from the wedding mandap. Like us they draw their own conclusions: that it symbolises the male phallus penetrating the female earth.)

### VIII. The Night of the Viva

In the late afternoon the final preparations are made for the arrival of the zan. Arrangements are made with neighbouring hamlets for uthak to be set aside to house the lada's party with its womenfolk, and for the men to be housed separately. The ladi has her bath and changes into her clothes for the night ahead. The piti scraped from her arms is mixed with some salt and bound up with white cotton inside two clay hemi-spheres. This will be smashed under the foot of the lada as he makes his final entrance for the phera.

Judging by what we were told of weddings of old, there now appears to have been a considerable relaxation of the custom whereby the zan was kept isolated from the host village.

DADI ZATU - There are a lot of customs that used to be part of our weddings, but which "they" have removed from the proceedings. In the old days when the zan came it remained outside the village. Then the ladi's relatives would take various

items out to the lada. Only after he had broken the clay pot could he enter, and proceed directly to the mandua. [18/9/81]

This relaxation of barriers has not occurred to such an extent across the border in Gujarat,

JNY - Are the zan allowed into the ladi's village?

KEHA'S MBS - Only after the lagan has been handed over (see below). This has seldom not happened at a viva, but occasionally there is some dispute and the ladi's father refuses to hand over the lagan. If this is the case the zan cannot enter the village. [27/3/82]

The last rite performed before the arrival of the zan is the lifting of the gothiro, at sunset. Again, when we look to traditions of old we find a stronger connection between the gothiro and the zan itself.

DADI ZATI - So many customs have now been removed since the days when I was young. It used to be that the lada was not even allowed into the village until the gothiro had been brought to the entrance. He would wait for it there and drop five rupees into the pot. [9/2/82]

As has been mentioned, throughout the night of the viva the lada is visited by deputations from the ladi's party. These deputations are made up of the ladi's mother, womenfolk to sing, and young male relatives or ZH. Dadi Zati described in ideal terms the structure of these meetings.

DADI ZATI - When the zan comes, the lagan is first taken out to it, and sweetmeats are given in return. One of the lagan songs are sung while this is done. Then what we call the "ma vanora" (mother's vanora) is taken to him. This consists of rice and ghi and a glass of water for him to wash his hands. We sing "On the village gate (torani) sits a sparrow". Although the food is delivered, the lada does not eat it, but merely sits under his shawl and touches it with his hand.

Next ghi is brought, and rice. This is called "five havlo", and the ghi song is sung.

Next the lada's wheat pudding is brought. This is pudding, and rotlo, made especially for him only by the ladi's mother.

Then the lada's party go to the torani to hand over the ladi's clothes which they have brought, and the jewelry, returning the lagan with them. The ladi's party sing a special song to receive them.

Finally the lada enters the village for the phera. [2/2/82]



Whether or not this schedule is kept to at the viva will depend on how much time has been given before the phera, and on how well organised things are.

## IX. The Phera

The timing of the phera is set by the lagan. It usually is timed to occur between two and four a.m., the coldest part of the night. Whereas in the past the villagers and guests might have kept awake, warmed by competitive dancing and high spirits, this is less the case now, and the circling of the fire is attended mainly by the young and fit among the more distant relatives, the close female relations, the aides, and the ladi and lada themselves. The following is an account of the phera of Mali (d/o Lakshman Adi'hra).

The lada's procession was escorted to the mandua and the lada was seated on the eastern of the two quilted seats which had been placed on its south side. He sat facing north, and his womenfolk sat on mats behind him.

At each of the outside corners of the mandua had been placed brass pots of water. There is a sequel to this custom in the traditions of old.

DADI ZATU - The Mandua used to have clay pots at its four corner. They would be piled in a column to at least the height of a man. Two columns would be supplied by the grooms side and two by the brides. After the phera they would be distributed among the women.

What tended to happen, however, was that the women would all desire a particular pot, and as soon as the phera ceremony finished there would be a mad rush and several struggles. Often whole columns would collapse and be smashed. That is why the custom was removed.

The pots were of good clay and were supplied by the potters. [16/1/81]

After some time the ladi, Mali, was brought out. She was wearing a white shawl over her face and upper body, and over this had been wrapped a green sunari (tie-dyed shawl). She was seated on the western of the two seats and her womenfolk sat behind her. Ganga's MBD then organised the tying together of the ladi and lada - although by all verbal accounts this has to be done by the ladi's der (HyB).

NANI - It is the der who ties the sera (cord) at the phera. It then remains attached to the ladi's sunari until after the couple have circled the Hutani fire (see 6.3 below). [23/2/82]

They are tied together with the sera, a length of cotton cloth wound around a stronger length of cotton string. This is wrapped accross the lada's shoulders and under his arms and stretches back to the ladi where a halter is made of the string which is hung around her neck while the cotton cloth itself is tied to the corner of her sunari.

A fire was lit on the northern side of the mandua's central pillar, and Mali's ZH tended it, squatting on the ground and pouring a mixture of ghi and aniseed on to the coconut which burned in the flames. The lada then proceeded to pace very slowly around fire and the central pillar and the ladi's ZH himself, in an anti-clockwise direction. The ladi followed in tow, helped by her elder brother. While they circled the two parties of womenfolk were each singing their own separate song simultaneously (see Appendix II).

The lada paced with his ceremonial green embroidered handkerchief in his left hand, and his decorated riding crop held against his left shoulder like a soldier might hold a rifle. As he circled, the young men of the village did their utmost to poke fun and make him smile. His features remained stony and silent. The ZH kept the fire going, keeping count also of the number of circles which had been made, for with the slow pace and the joking it was easy to forget (see Plate VI.).

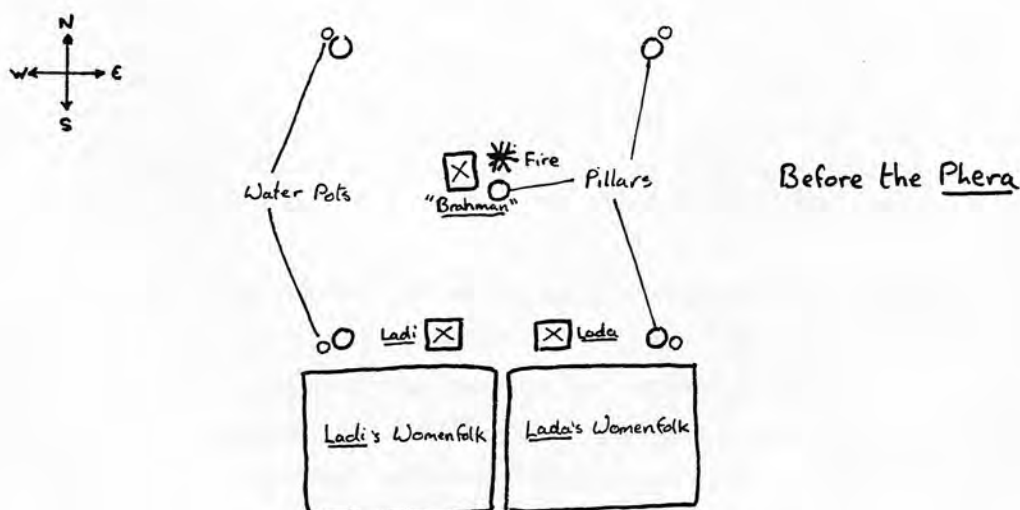
Finally the ZH declared that the fourth circle was underway. The two groups of women then changed places behind the seats, and the lada was steered into the western seat which had previously been occupied by the ladi, and the ladi steered into the eastern.

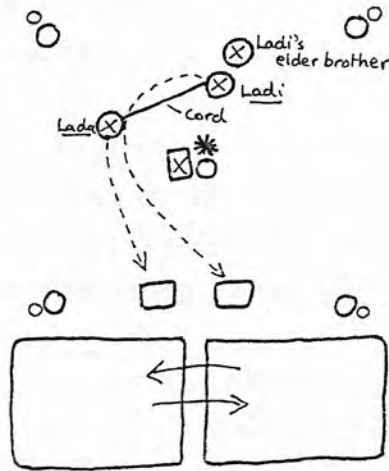
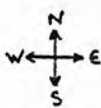
(The Freeds note a similar exchange of seats.

The priest said that this change showed that they were both equal and that one was not on a higher level than the other (1980:482).

While Kori views would support this, the fact that a DH or ZH is called in to officiate if no Brahman is available indicates some traces of hypergamous ideals.)

While the sera was being detached from the lada's shoulders, the ladi's womenfolk started up a rude song. This caused much embarrassment among the old ladies, and amusement elsewhere.





The Final Circle

The ladi's mother then approached the couple and saluted them, lada and ladi in turn. The lada's mother did likewise. [3/2/82]

According to many accounts, this occasion is the opportunity for the lada to take advantage of the situation.

NANI - When they have done the phera, the WM places a tili on the forehead of the lada, and the HM does likewise. The lada can then grab the corner of his WM's sunari and not let go until he has been promised a cow, or a buffalo (i.e. a milk giving animal). [6/1/82]

In the case of Mali, this opportunity was ignored. In the past, however, this part in the proceedings was seen to be more elaborate.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - The weddings of old were very bad/mischievous. The lada and ladi were made to stand holding each other, and a large grain pounder was passed through between them. The same was done with a reed. Both of them stood while it was extracted from between them. Then the lada's WM would grab his nose like this (he demonstrated) and pull, so as to extract his "breath" (ziv/semen). My own WM did this to me when I was married.

Then the lada would grab the corner of her shawl and demand "What will you give me?" She would then have to promise a milk giving animal before he would let go. [9/3/82]

It is only when there are no Brahman available that the ZH or DH is called upon to burn the wedding fire. At the viva of Babu Paji a Brahman was available, and he chanted his sacred formulae throughout the circling in a language that no-one but he could understand, stopping at the end of each phrase to draw breath and pour more ghi on to the

fire. On that occasion those who wished to poke fun at the lada were told to be silent, lest they disturb the concentration of the Brahman. Babu's viva occurred at a village far to the east of Sirah, however, where some Brahman still lived.

The phera is the fundamental rite of the viva. To have a viva is to have a phera. Why need we look any further for meaning? The answer is: because it is possible for man and woman to be united in marriage outwith the viva and the phera taking place at all.

The alternatives to viva are either to elope, or to "make a house". The latter is the union of a man with a woman who has already been married and is either divorced or widowed. A man may undergo several phera himself, but a woman may undergo only one. The making of the house involves the payment of a prearranged sum to the parents of the women. There is no other ritual to be undertaken.

Whereas "housemaking" is within socially prescribed rules of conduct, eloping is definitely outside them, although it is tolerated in the place where the couple have managed to settle.

JNY - Do couples often elope?

DADI ZATI - Not too often. What they do is this. They get someone to hold a shangitro bush aloft, and then they walk around it four times and say that they are married. (She chuckled at the silliness of this.)

JNY - Can they not live together without doing a phera at all?

DADI ZATI - No! They must phera to be married. [22/12/81]

The phera is for the pure, for the virgin bride. This is supported by the explanation given by Kanu Driver.

KANU DRIVER - When Rama rescued Sita, and brought her home, the people all said, "How can you be married to a woman who has been stolen away and defiled by one so wicked?"

Sita had to prove her purity, and so both she and Rama entered a large fire which had been built for the purpose, and walked around inside it. This is why we walk around the fire at our viva. They remained in the fire for the four quarters of the night, and so we make four circles at our viva. [6/1/82]

It would appear from the above, and from what we have seen, that the circling of the fire is a declaration of the ladi's virginity, as well as

a binding of the relationship between ladi and lada. The mention of Rama and Sita and the presence of the Brahman all tie in with the song sung at the phera by the lada's womenfolk. The fuller meaning of the song must be drawn from the following, which is a part of the tale of Visvamanthar and Harchand Raza recited to me by Sando Zandariya.

... King Harchand was greatly dismayed on hearing that his pap was great, and asked how it could be absolved. "It could be absolved if you were to cover the costs of the viva of two unmarried people", was the Brahman's reply. (To marry those who would not otherwise be able to afford it was considered to be an act of dharam.)

Visvamanthar then turned himself into an unmarried couple and appeared nearby. The Brahman then ordered the King to organise the phera at that very place. When the couple had completed the first circle, the Brahman, who was presiding over the wedding fire, asked King Harchand what offering he was going to give him. King Harchand took a handful of dust and gave it to the him, but the ladi cried out, "He means he is giving you all the land he owns." King Harchand reluctantly had to agree.

The second circle was completed, and again the Brahman asked what offering he was going to be given. Harchand handed to him the reigns of his horse, but the ladi cried out, "He means that he is giving you all the animals he owns." Again, the King had to agree.

The third circle was completed, and this time King Harchand gave the Brahman his key. But the ladi cried out, "He is really giving you his palace."

The fourth circle was completed, and then the Brahman demanded that King Harchand give the ladi one and a quarter ser of silver, as was the custom.. King Harchand explained that, as he had no silver with him, he would have to fetch some. Off he went... [28/5/82]

The story went on to tell of King Harchand's fall from grace and of his eventual restoration, but for the moment let us draw from it what we have learned. When the phera took place, the Brahman was to be given an offering.

JNY - Is this why, at the phera, the women sing "The Brahman requested an offering, gold in colour"? (see Appendix II)

SANDO ZANDARIYA - Yes. The Brahman is asking for gold. It was the custom in the old days, but now only the song survives. But the ladi is still given one and a quarter ser of silver, in the form of her silver halter and bracelets. [28/5/82]



## X. The Counting of Hands

We have already mentioned that viva are financed by wedding payments made by the guests, these being repayments of similar payments made to them in the past by their hosts. The payments are made in the morning after the phera, when all the guests have feasted on rice cooked in spices, the more elaborate meal having been served the night before.

The lada's and ladi's households collect their payments separately, most of the lada's payments having already been made the day before after the zanotoro. The donations are known as the "hand-count" (hath-gin). As they are made the donors name is called out in a loud voice, and a scribe writes it down alongside the sum paid. Whereas the average given at a wedding would be in the region of five thousand rupees, I have seen as much as seventeen thousand given on one occasion when the father of the groom was a very rich man. This sum is more notable when it is realised that the average Kori would be fortunate to earn more than two thousand rupees a year as a tenant farmer.

JNY - Why is one and a quarter rupees so significant at weddings?

DADI ZATU - They say that the HB must give the ladi one and a quarter rupees to start off the hath-gin. Otherwise it will not be started. [16/3/82]

## XI. The Departure

The lada and ladi are fed separately the special foods prepared for them, and preparations are made for the ritual departure. The lada and his party proceed to the mandua by mid-morning when the sun is beginning to take the chill off the winter day. The lada takes up position, sitting facing north at the north side of the mandua, his aides on either side, and his womenfolk behind. There they wait patiently while their women sing.

But the ladi does not wish to come. She does not wish to leave her home, her family, the only world she has ever really known. And so begins again the sorrow first glimpsed at the first filling of her pahli (palms) many days before. For the time has come for her final pahli to be filled

by her mother. Once more the ladi's wailing is heard, and this time her cries are closer to the reality, and the grief of her village and her relatives more deeply felt.

On hearing the singing her womenfolk gather to dress her for departure, and in gathering they too are soon weeping. Her house becomes crowded with weeping women and weeping children, above the noise of which rises her ritual broken wailing. And this wailing drifts out into the open where it reaches the ears of the party waiting to take her away.

After much delay, the ladi is dressed and ready, wearing the sunari of the phera with the cord attached. She is then embraced by all the women in turn, and lastly by her mother who then fills her pahli with grain. She is then lead out by her aides with her women in procession. At the mandua the lada's party rise, and the cord is passed from hand to hand through his womenfolk and attached to his shoulders again. All this time the ladi is wailing her sorrow to the world.

The Lada's mother greets the lada, and fills his pahli with grain. Then the whole procession sets off at a slow pace towards the village entrance: the lada and his aides under their green canopy followed by their womenfolk, followed by the ladi, her aides and womenfolk. Again there is a simultaneous singing of two songs (see Appendix II).

The villagers watch from near or far as the procession finally reaches the torani. As he passes through it the lada tosses his pahli of grain back over his head and over the torani itself, scattering it in a final offering to the village (and to Ganesh). The ladi empties her palms in a similar fashion, and is left standing with the lada's womenfolk and in the keeping of her hahu (HM).

She stands outside the torani while her hahu tries unsuccessfully to comfort her. Her womenfolk have left her, but now it is the turn of her menfolk, her brothers, cousins, and uncles, to say their farewells. They come out one by one and embrace her. Her father seldom comes, he is too overcome with grief and worry, bearing the full responsibility of the marriage. The ladi waits, but in vain, and is eventually lead off by her zan without being allowed to look back.

The rites are not over, however. On their arrival at the village of the lada, the couple are saluted by the lada's mother. Then she holds out a kneading-bowl of water and backs quickly down the village while they are supposed to try and splash water from it over her. On their arrival at the lada's house a further rite takes place.

DADI ZATI - When the ladi is brought home with the lada she is sat down opposite him. She faces south and the lada north. A kneading-bowl of water is placed between them, and then her der (HyB) takes two of her silver wedding rings from her, and one from the lada, and some grain, and throws them into the bowl. It used to be that the lada and ladi would then grab with their right hands to see who could get the most. It was one of our customs.

I remember in my case the der was angry, and made to throw but held back. Both my dani (owner - i.e. husband) <sup>and I</sup> were left grabbing at nothing, and everybody laughed. But these days the ladi does not grab. She just sits with her hand on the edge of the bowl while the lada grabs.

The der then takes five cotton buds and places one on each of the lada's knees, his shoulders, and one on top of his crown. The ladi then removes the one on his right knee. The der removes the remaining buds, and then repeats the whole exercise. This is done three times in all. The der then places the buds on the ladi's knees, shoulders, and head. The first three times this is done the lada knocks the bud off her right knee with his riding crop. The fourth time, however, he knocks the bud off the ladi's head. Then all the rites are finished. [9/2/82]

Up to this point the ladi has remained veiled. It is not until she has learned to distinguish between her new male relatives and knows which must be "avoided" that she can risk lifting her shawl from her face. She remains at her home for three days, after which her brother, father, or sister's husband comes to fetch her back to her parent's home again.

## XII. The Viva and the Zach Mata

This leads us to one further aspect of the marriage exchange which must be discussed.

NANI - When the ladi leaves for her own home after the three days, her HM spreads her skirt on the ground and places on it grain and a coconut or five rupees. She then salutes the ladi with some of this grain, and ties the rest up in her shawl. This is for the ladi to take to be offered to her zach mata. [23/2/82]

The dev of the respective parties are also included in the celebrations, although their participation must be delayed until after Ganesh has departed the scene.

JARI - After the ladi has been taken away we take Lord Ganesh out to the sand dunes. We bring some grain and some raw sugar. We greet him with the grain, and distribute the sugar among the zach girls. The grain is left with him.

It is like the days when he is enthroned, and grain and sugar are left before him daily. So it is at the end. That is his payment (she chuckled). Then the birds come and eat the grain. [8/5/82]

The Ganesh from the lada's village is taken outside the village after the zan has departed for the viva. Once Ganesh is out of the way, offerings can be made to the mata. But these offerings are not from the people of the zach, but from their new affines :

a). The lada's party give for the ladi's mata on the morning after the phera -

Quote RAMSHI VARESA - Just before they left, Homi's HF asked how many madh there were in the village. Then he gave me thirty rupees to distribute among them, so that coconut could be offered at each one. This is our custom. [3/3/82]

b). The ladi's mother gives the lada's womenfolk a clay pot sealed with a green cloth.

DADI ZATI - This is the ma matli (mother's pot). We give it to our daughters. It contains the one and a quarter rupees from the lagan, tied up in a green sunari, and a container of ghi, raw sugar, and rice. This is for the lada's dev. [23/2/82]

c). On her return from the lada's village, the ladi is given offerings for her dev by her HM (see XI. above).

We will discuss below the lada/ladi's involvement in the Holi festival following their wedding. After this festival is over a further rite has to be performed whereby the wedding cord (sera), which was first tied at the phera, is untied. The following rite was observed at the madh in the Mayani village in the cold sunlight of a March morning.

A lada and ladi had arrived. They had come to get their sera untied at the madh. Shavo Bhopa was there, as was his wife. The madh, at that time, was located behind Buro's house. Sweet porridge and ghi was offered to Savan. After the couple had bowed to the mata, a girl

untied the sera.

Coconut and porridge was then distributed to the houses in the hamlet, and the village men were invited to come and worship, and eat the porridge. The womenfolk took their porridge home to eat. [23/1/81]

DASRATH SHEKHANI - Now, about the untying of the sera. In the old days there used to be a special fruit found in India which would be bound in a cloth to the right hand of both the lada and the ladi. This was the mindur. These days people use dates instead. The ladi's der (HyB) binds them on and it is he who must take them off. The lada and ladi must go to the mata and offer sweet porridge and such things, and then the der unties the mindur. The mindur is proof that the wedding has taken place. [30/9/81]

NANI - The couple go to the lada's madh where they make a sweet offering: coconut, rice - porridge if there is no rice, with ghi and raw sugar. Half of this offering is donated by the lada's family, and half by the ladi's. They give five measures each of rice, or flour for porridge.

The rice is offered, and then fed to everyone, and a diva is burned at the madh. The sera is untied by the der, and the sunari is given to the ladi. The sera and the two "crowns" (also worn at the phera) are left with the mata. All this is done after Holi, unless there has been a birth or a death in which case it is postponed for a few days. If this untying rite is not performed, then the couple will be plagued with illness. [16/2/82]

### XIII. Summary

We have examined in detail the series of exchanges which make up that part of the marriage which is the viva. We have seen an intricate pattern of rites which, judging by what used to be done and is now done no more, are constantly subject to the possibility of change. (E.g. the accommodation now provided for the zan within the village; the WM's greeting of the lada at the torani before the phera - VIII; the pots at the four corners of the mandua - IX; etc.) Although the rites are generally the affair of the women, whether or not they are changed depends upon how they are seen by their men. This in turn depends upon their compatibility with regard to the Kori's status as a caste, or upon whether economic change has cast the rites in a new light, or upon whether they are logistically more difficult to perform, or upon whether they have declined in popularity and serve no other purpose.



Because this possibility of change exists, it can be asserted that those rites which continue to be practised have withstood the pressure to change. Rituals cannot exist in isolation, without meaning anything to those that perform them. What used to be functional rites in the place and time when there were potters to mould clay Ganesh, and orchard-keepers to deliver banana trees, continue to be performed. Now, however, the village craftswoman, or the inanimate trees themselves, are greeted and gifted to in their place. These rites are not relics of a by-gone era, but, by their very survival through adaptation, prove themselves to be meaningful to the Kori women, perhaps symbolising their ties with the caste society of India.

One theme which is recognised in the viva has already been mentioned. It is the notion of the journey upon which the lada and ladi set out. This lasts from the first seating of Ganesh until the return with the ladi to the lada's village. During that time Ganesh, protector of the sojourner, is worshipped. The lada/ladi becomes Ganesh's disciple, colouring his/her skin yellow in keeping with Ganesh's skin, and wearing green clothing in keeping with his clothes. All major rites are undertaken underneath a green canopy, from the pahli processions to the phera beneath the leaves of the banana trees.

During this time the lada and ladi lead lives which are unusual. They do not bathe, they eat rich foods, they do no work, and eventually they are rendered dumb, the puppets of their aides, and dressed in the highly stylised wedding costumes which will never be worn again. They are made into stereotypes, figures with which all their relations can identify, allowing the participation of everyone in what is, in effect, a group rite, through their identification with the bride and groom. The Bengali ethnography of Inden and Nicholas echos this observation.

They [the bride and groom] are acted upon, and when they act themselves it is under the explicit control of some external master (Inden & Nicholas 1977:36).

There are few exceptions to the rule of marriage. Not to be married was inconceivable to many, as is illustrated in the following, which is the response of Bozo Akhiyani when the subject of the celibacy of Roman Catholic Fathers was once raised.

BOZO AKHIYANI - But, if these Fathers remain single, how can they ever marry? [16/9/81]

Both the newborn child, and the newly married couple are given special roles in the Hutani (Holi) celebrations which fall after their birth or their marriage. As the winter's wedding seasons gradually subsided and the green wheat ripened, people began to speak of Hutani, and of eating dates. As the afternoon of the day of Hutani finally drew towards evening, several boys and girls appeared from different households bearing their burden of dried dates for us, just in case we had forgotten. We were told that the village would gather at the main entrance, and so we went out into the cool of the early evening to watch the preparations.

### I. Hutani Witnessed

Just before dusk, all the young girls brought out their dung cakes in reed baskets, or on loops of string. These cakes had appeared in clusters several days before, drying in the sun on walls, or in the spaces between houses. This was unusual as the villagers used brush-wood to fuel their hearths. Arjan's daughter, Haku, had said that she was making dung cakes for her newborn brother, Viram, and that this was the duty of girls, not boys. We did, however, see one or two smaller boys helping their sisters.

The cakes were piled in three piles in a north-south line at the clearing in front of the village entrance. A reed stalk with a white rag attached to its top was planted in the centre of each pile. The fires were eventually lit, and, after the reeds had toppled over amid cries of "Lord, this way please!" from the younger villagers, the older ones began to come out and do puja (join their palms in worship), offering a date to each fire in turn. Women who were with child remained at home, however.

Meanwhile boys, girls, and men hurried out carrying bundles of animal fodder. They each circled the line of fires once, in an anti-clockwise direction. The fodder was singed in each flame, while at the same time the bearers were careful not to look behind them, onlookers teasing them loudly in order to get them to do so.

Having done puja - even babies in their mother's arms had their hands clasped together and were bowed towards the flames and urged to part with a date - all the villagers sat and waited, the women on the northwest side of the circle, nearest the village entrance. Then out were brought the babies, newborn and experiencing their first Hutani. They were sung out by their women folk, singing wedding songs. They in turn then waited for the lada and ladi.

The lada came in procession, dressed in his wedding costume and again attached to his ladi by the sera. The ladi followed in her own wedding costume, and carried a lit diva on a clay pot under her left arm. They were sung out by the womenfolk, and left by them at the edge of the circle. There the lada's mother saluted them separately, cracking her knuckles and tossing pop-corn over them. The couple then led the procession around the fires, with the newborn baby boys following behind, carried by a man of their zach (see Plate VII.).

They all circled the fires four times in an anti-clockwise direction. The newborn sons were held in their elder male kinsman's right arm, and in their left they held a brass pot of water with a coconut atop. Water from the pot was splashed on the ground as they circled, and on completion of the final circle the pot and the coconut were offered at the foot of the southernmost fire. The baby boys wore green and had their sathi cloth tied round their heads.

Meanwhile the newborn baby girls were brought to the southernmost fire where they had an ash tili placed on their foreheads by their mothers who threw popcorn and saluted them. All those circling were also saluted thus on the completion of their circles. The remaining pop-corn and coconut was then shared out among the gathering.

Dates were swapped and people chatted as the fires burned down. When only glowing coals remained, they were spread together into one long line. Several young men then tried their hand at trotting over them, calling on the name of (Krishna) Bhagvan. They trotted from south to north and then back again. The spectacle over, the villagers drifted slowly back to their homes, many having already gone. [9/3/82]

## II. Hutani Explained

In the days that followed people were questioned about the different rites. Their answers are listed below, relating to the order in which the rites occurred.

JNY - Who is it that is to supply the dung cakes at Hutani: those with newborn children, or those where a marriage has taken place?

KARAM MAYANI - Any house can supply them, and generally all households contribute. [24/2/82]

JNY - What is the significance of the white cloth on the reed?

RATANI - It all depends on which side the reed falls. If it bows towards our country (i.e. Katch), then there will be much rain there. If it bows to the west then there will be rain in the hills (i.e. Baluchistan).

JNY - Why white?

LAVI - White is Sitla Mata's colour, is it not? Similarly it is also the colour of Holi Mata, the colour she wears. [15/3/82]

The young boys playing around the fires while the reeds burned had explained their meaning to me in more general terms, saying that the fields in the direction in which the reeds fell were to have a good harvest that year.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - When they bring out the fodder to circle the fires they are not supposed to speak until it has been fed to their animals, otherwise the animals will fall ill. Some fall ill anyway, however. (Conversation about Hindu rituals often put Arjan in a cynical mood.) [15/5/81]

JNY - Why are those who carry the fodder around the fires teased about not looking back?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - (He chuckled..) If you look back you will see a dzinn. [9/3/82]

JNY - Why is it that women who are newly married and pregnant do not circle the Hutani fires with their husbands?

DADI ZATU - It is because they have a boy in their stomach, in which case they would be being wed to their son. Or they may have a daughter, in which case she would be circling the fire with her father. If the wife of a newly married couple is

pregnant then only the husband circles. [11/2/82]

We see a direct relationship here, between the wedding fire and that of Hutani.

JNY - Why can pregnant women not circle the fires at Hutani?

BURO MAYANI - It is a crime against Ishvar if they go around together.

JNY - But pregnant women cannot even approach the Hutani fire.

KARAM MAYANI - If there is an eclipse, then it is harmful to the child if its mother squints at the sun. Maybe it is the same with the Hutani fires. [25/2/82]

JNY - Why is popped corn used to salute the lada and ladi?

MAMA SAHADEVA - Grain is inedible and no good, whereas popped corn is edible. [15/3/82]

JNY - What is the meaning of the divo which the ladi carries?

DADI ZATI - We say that she has to be careful and not let the divo go out. If it goes out then she is a Meghvar, and the Meghvar will take her away. So she is very careful with her pot and makes sure that it has a lid to keep out the wind. It must not go out until she gets home. But who is to know whether or not it has gone out, for it is inside the pot? [15/3/82]

DADI ZATU - A woman can only circle the flames twelve times in her lifetime: four times at her viva, four times at the Hutani which follows it, and four times when she dies, before she is buried. A man, by comparison, can circle many times, for he can marry again. This is why when a boy is born there is happiness. When a boy is born he is taken around the fire at Hutani by his father. When it is a girl she has to bow to the flames. A coconut is offered and a tili is placed on her forehead and her mother salutes her. [11/2/82]

JNY - Is the baby girl sung out by the women as is the baby boy?

RATANI (w/o Lavi Dungarani) - No! The baby boy circles, the baby girl bows down. [15/3/82]

JNY - Why does the father of the baby boy sprinkle water on



the ground as he circles with his child?

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - He is cooling Hutani down.

DADI ZATU - He is cooling down the ground in case hutani burns them. For is she not fire? [15/3/82]

We have drifted through the events which occur at Hutani, and the meanings attributed to them, in a rough chronological sequence. The explanation for the festival as a whole has not, however, been discussed.

DADI ZATU - Hutani and Holi are one and the same. It is the name of the fire herself. The Sindi call her Holi, the Bhil call her Hori, and the Parkari (Koli) call her Hutani.

JNY - Who is Hutani?

NANI - (After some embarrassment) They say that it is the name of a Bhil woman, that Hachmo is the name of a Koli woman, and that Divari (Divali) is the name of a Vaniya woman. [15/3/82]

LAVI DUNGARANI - Holi Mata is the fire mata. I heard a programme on the radio once and it explained all about Holi and Hutani. It was from India, and it made everything clear to me. But I have forgotten most of it. [15/3/82]

We visited some Kori relations of the villagers in Gujarat soon after, and they had much the same to say.

OLD MAN - Fires are lit at Hutani, although I personally cannot be bothered with such things. It was said that there was once a Bhil woman who was burned in a fire in the place of Ishvar who she had tried to test. [27/3/82]

The explanation of Kanu was, by contrast, far more elaborate.

KANU DRIVER - I will tell you the story of Pelaj Bhagat. Ravan was the ruler and Pelaj was his younger brother. Ravan gave the command that all should worship him, but his younger brother refused, saying that he would worship Rama only, for Rama was Ishvar.

Ravan then placed an iron pillar in the middle of a fire and said, "Go and embrace that pillar! If you are burned then you will have been proved wrong. But, if not, then I will believe that the Rama you worship is Ishvar, and not I, for he will have saved you. If you refuse to embrace the pillar then I will kill you with my sword.

Pelaj Bhagat looked at the pillar which was red hot and thought, "I will surely die. But better to burn to death than to be killed by the sword". But, when he looked closely, he saw that there were ants crawling along it. He thought to himself,

"If they do not burn, then neither shall I". So he embraced the pillar, and was not burned

Ravan said, "Now I see Rama's power. He went on afterwards to steal Sita, and the war with Rama followed. [2/6/82]

This is not far removed from the "official" version of this tale, which tells of how Pelaj was ordered to worship his father, but insisted on worshipping Rama. He was cast into the fire with his aunt, who could not be burned. He was rescued by Rama.

The meaning behind the Hutani rituals is more complex than this, however. Conversation with Ramzi Mahaleyo supported this.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - It used to be that Hutani was a much bigger affair. The women would all bring out live coals from their hearths and light the fires with them. The whole village would be seated and watching from the time the fires were lit until they were burned down. Then, finally, the women would each take some of the burning coals back to their own hearths, and these hearths would be kept burning for twelve months until the next Hutani. Coals were the basis of cooking fires as people did not have matches in those days. [9/3/82]

To what, then, do we owe this decrease in the magnitude of the Hutani festivities? Is it now less of an event because of the advent of the matchbox? Or is it because of the demise of Hindu power in Sind? If the former were the case, then why does Hutani continue to be celebrated, if in a diminished form? Perhaps the most significant comment which I heard on the topic of Hutani were made by Shavo Bhopa one morning.

SHAVO BHOPA - Hutani is when the fire mata is worshipped. Are not fires lit and worshipped? The animal fodder is circled around the flames to ensure the animal's safety against the illness which effects their feet and their mouths, and other such sicknesses. The babies are circled around to ensure that they will remain safe and happy. The same is true for the married couples. When the young men walk over the coals they call on the fire mata to protect them. If their heart is true they will remain unharmed. But if there is any falseness they will burn. [7/10/81]

There is scope here for much anthropological conjecture. Fire is central to the ritual. Each village household contributes dung cakes, and at an earlier time burning coals, to the central blazes. Domestic, individual fire becomes unified ritual fire. Such fire is unusually powerful, and is treated with respect. The villagers offer dates to her, the

animals offer fodder, and this secures a physical well-being which no cooking-hearth could provide.

Fire is ambivalent and dangerous, but is necessary, and so newborn babies must be introduced to her in a ritual manner, accompanied by offerings of coconut and grain. This ensures their relationship with her is started on the right footing. Even so, water is needed as a protection of sorts. Unborn children are kept well away.

Yet, men are more compatible with fire than women. The newborn boys circle the fire, lead by the lada leading the ladi. Newborn girls are merely presented, then stand back again. The man can circle the fire often: as a child, as a lada as often as he marries, as a father with his own sons. The woman's number of circles is limited to twelve: at marriage, at the following Hutani, and at her burial. On the first two of these occasions she is accompanied by her husband. On the last she is buried by her male relatives. It is the young men who walk the coals, testing their standing in the eyes of the fire mata. The womenfolk sit and watch.

Fire is used to sanctify birth, marriage, and death. Fire is also used to cook food. Fire is the medium whereby the raw and vulnerable and the impure or perishable is transformed into that which is cooked, protected, and pure. The communal nature of the rituals carried out unite the scattered power of the household cooking fires, allowing them to become an instrument of divine intervention, and communally re-affirm men's relationship with the flames before they are returned once more to the hearths of women to be used by them for another year. Hutani, then, continues to be celebrated because it is essentially a festival for men.

Any mention of the more classical tale of Pelaj and Rama serves more to confirm the festival's importance in the eyes of the Kori villager than to give it meaning.

So far, all that has happened in the life of the individual has served to benefit the group of which s/he is a member. The individual male, for example, has strengthened the group by his birth, and then his marriage. The membership of the female is not so celebrated, nevertheless she does contribute her labour in her youth, and links her group to her husband's on marriage. On the death of a man or a woman, however, their membership becomes a liability to the group.

### I. The Burial - Who is Eligible?

The performance of the rites before, during, and after the burial can be seen to be motivated by a combination of two main factors. Firstly, they are performed altruistically, for the sake of the ziv of the deceased person, so that it may speed happily on its way into a new life after death. Secondly, they are performed to prevent its return to trouble the group with ghostly fears and possessions. Both factors are evident in conversations about death, but the latter is more so. Having died, the ziv can no longer contribute to the well-being of the group - although intercessions to it may be of benefit to the individuals who carry them out (see 4.1). The ziv can still trouble the group, however, and must be pacified and sent on its way (see also Phillimore 1980:111).

The latter motivation is reflected clearly in the Kori classification of who is and is not qualified for proper burial, and indeed, a proper funeral. Dadi Zati, when telling the tale of a woman who had been attacked by a dog, went on to explain about the child with whom she was pregnant at the time.

DADI ZATI - She let out a cry, and another woman found her, and she was brought into the house. Her pain had started, and she began to give birth. The blood was still spurting out from where she had been bitten in the chest, so they placed two brass coins in the teeth marks. But this caused the blood to descend instead into her stomach, and this killed the child. She died herself soon afterwards. How could she live with her son dead inside her like that? She died with the child's head half in, half outside her.

There was a bhopa living there at that time. It was he who cut her open and pulled the baby back inside and then out

through the cut. We say that the unborn should not be buried properly, but should be buried out in the fields somewhere. [1/3/82]

We have already seen (6.1) that it is not only the unborn child who does not receive a proper burial and, indeed, that it is only after it has been named that the child's death becomes the group's responsibility. From the Ghirya Sutras Das (1982:123) discerns that, as cremation is essentially a sacrifice of the body to Agni, the fire goddess, those whose intention to be so sacrificed is not established are buried - e.g. children, or victims of sudden or unnatural death. The Freed (1980:510) also find that, in former times, all infants were buried, although this was because they were deemed unfit for cremation as their souls must have been very evil for them to have died so soon.

Ghurye notes an interesting transformation among the Mahadev Koli.

When burials were the rule those who died suddenly after a long disease were burned. Today [when cremation is the rule] such ones are buried (Ghurye 1963:79).

While the Kori do not cremate their dead, everyone with a name is accorded a proper burial. What appears to be important is not the state of the individual, but his/her relationship to the group.

DADI ZATI - On the death of a child we only give it a proper burial if it has undergone sathi and been named. If it dies on its seventh, or eighth day, then it is buried in the graveyard. If it dies before sathi ("sixth"), then there is no proper burial. It is thrown out onto the sand. A child with a name must go to the graveyard, but one with no name stays at home. [9/8/81]

Girls are also the responsibility of the group after their sixth day, despite the lack of fuss made of them. The death rites of a three month old girl will be looked at below. Even where proper rites are accorded, however, the full treatment is only given to those who have died after marriage.

NANI - It used to be the case that the bodies of big people would be burned, those who had been married. Children would be buried. [11/6/82]

We shall also see below how this gradation of group responsibilities is carried through to the funeral itself, when the amount of ceremony performed varies with the individual's life-span.



## II. The Construction of the Grave

What then of burial itself? Here we find an opposition to marriage ritual which can even be found in the actual excavation of the grave.

DADI ZATU - When a man is buried his feet point to the south. When we sleep we ensure that our own feet are pointing either east or south. Only the lada faces north. [30/8/82]

Rather than looking for an explanation in these directions themselves, we can find one in the structures which they represent. North is opposed to south, as the lada is opposed to the corpse.

SHAVO BHOPA - Graves must be dug in a north-south direction. It used to be the case that the body was just lowered in and covered with earth. But these days a shelf is made on the west side, and once the body has been laid on this, with its feet to the south, it is walled up so that no earth will fall on the face. Then this wall is plastered. Only after that is the actual grave filled in. [7/10/81]

MAMA SAHADEVA - A grave should not be dug and then left empty. It should be prepared just before the actual burial, just as a house should never be left empty. [30/11/81]

MAMA SAHADEVA - Sindi are buried as we are, with their feet to the south and their head to the north. But the Sindi are far more elaborate with their arrangements. Their grave is walled in on all four sides with wood, and they bury the shroud with the body. [29/12/81]

## III. Burial and Cremation

What we see here is the gradual move away from a disinterest in the preservation of the body after death, typified in the Hindu rite of cremation, towards a pre-occupation with it, typified by the Muslim practice of burial where the body has a house made for it. Hindus burn their dead and Muslims bury their dead. Yet the Kori, who are proudly Hindu, bury their dead also. Why is this so?

DADI ZATI - We used to burn our dead, but not any more. The men say that the smell is bad, and enters their minds.

BAYA (w/o Vershi Adi'hra) - Yes, the smell of the burning body is

very evil. Much wood is needed. [20/6/81]

Others had other reasons.

MOHON MAYANI - It is far too expensive to burn the body. There is not enough wood available for the fire, and you also need an awful lot of ghi to complete the task. [9/6/82]

Yet, in the old days when they did burn their dead, the Kori were less well off than they are now. This issue was raised with the relations of the Sirah villagers who lived across the border in Gujarat. These Kori were much poorer and lived in a land where firewood was scarce. Nevertheless, they still burned their dead. I pointed this out to Mohon, and this fact caused him much consternation and embarrassment.

MOHON MAYANI - I do not really know when, why, or who got rid of the custom of burning. But I do remember that when my mother died when I was young we burned her body, mixed her remains with flowers, and floated them down the river. [9/6/82]

Arjan approached the matter more directly.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - In India you see much better customs. I think it is the Vaniya, or maybe the Khatari, who burn their dead, then sing hymns all night at the spot. [24/4/82]

Similarly, Nani had no reservations on the matter.

JNY - Are the bodies burned after death?

NANI - They used to be burned when the Vaniya were here, but not anymore. [16/5/81]

On another occasion, Dadi Zati confessed her preference for cremation.

DADI ZATI - All bodies should be buried, or at least covered over. This is to prevent the animals from eating them. Even so, the maggots will still eat them. That is why burning is best. For then they are kept from even the maggots. But there is a shortage of wood these days, so no body is burned. [16/4/82]

A relative of Zavo's once explained the disadvantages of cremation to me in an elaborate manner.

HURANI - Let me explain. When we used to burn our dead, this is what would happen. The fire would be lit and the clothes and everything would burn up. Then, as the body itself began to burn, its flesh would contract and it would sit up.. Now, if it were your mother you were burning, think how awful it would be. There she would be, naked and upright. You would have made a slut of her.

Worse still, you would have to take a stick and poke at the burning body, pushing it to pieces so that it can burn up completely. And then there are the parts that explode. The stomach, for example, when water flies in all directions and bits of stomach with it. Then there are those bodily organs that will not burn. The heart of the man will not burn, nor will that organ of the woman which lies below her stomach (i.e. her genitals). These will not burn at all. So, you see, it is much better for our dead to be buried. [6/6/82]

Again it was Nani, the eldest and most cynical of Sirah's old ladies, who by-passed all elaborate reasoning and merely stated the facts as she knew them.

NANI - It used to be that the bodies of big people were burned, those who were married. The bodies of children were buried. Now no-one is burned. This was stopped by our elders. Not by the bhagat, but by our elders. [11/6/82]

In the light of the fact that the Kori now living in Gujarat still burn the dead, despite all the disadvantages argued by their Sindi Kori relatives, it could be said that the reasons given by the latter were unsatisfactory, that they were mere justifications after the fact, and that the main reason why they now bury their dead is to be found elsewhere. (It is worth mentioning here that it is the usual practice for caste Hindus to employ low ranking specialists to perform the task of burying their dead, a point which was never raised by the Kori, despite the subject of cremation being discussed on numerous occasions.)

The outsider does not have to look far to find a more plausible reason. The Sindi Muslims bury their dead, looking upon the practice of cremation as a barbarous custom which is typical of their "primitive, ignorant, and idolatrous" Hindu neighbours. The Sindi Muslims are currently the dominant economic and political force in rural Sind, and it is in the best interests of the Kori to disassociate themselves from such public practices as would allow their Sindi neighbours to label them as "primitive" and low caste.

In the same manner the Kori worship of mata is being superceded in importance by Bhakti, and rituals with no known origin, other than that they are tradition, are being replaced by those whose origins can be said to be in the scriptures. It is, however, a fundamental collective belief of the Kori that they are high caste (see Chapter 7 below). They would be unlikely, therefore, to wish to explain such trends as being the result

of the views of their Muslim neighbours whom they look down upon.

Kori rituals are therefore modified so as to avoid that which the Sindi would look down upon, for example, cremation. This allows the Kori to remain ritually superior in their own eyes, without encouraging the Sindi to view them as inferior. It is most unlikely, however, that such a motive would ever be voiced by any individual Kori, for, if the Sindi are considered to be low caste, why then should their views influence the superior rituals and beliefs of the Kori? Instead the ethnographer is faced with justifications couched in terms which do not challenge the belief that the Sindi are low caste, for example "There is a shortage of wood". And this is despite the fact that the belief that the Sindi are low caste IS challenged by the real reason for the change, which is that cremation is to be avoided because the Sindi look down upon it.

(The Kori do sometimes mention the fact that a match is lit and thrown into the grave at the burial. I myself witnessed this once, and it would appear to be the symbolic equivalent to cremation. Even so, while burial and cremation were often discussed, this fact was rarely mentioned, and I would attribute this either to its lack of importance in the Kori's eyes, or the fact that they might have felt too ashamed of the custom to tell me of it.)

#### IV. A Burial Witnessed

Let us return to the burial. One November afternoon, a messenger arrived with the news that Kaya Akhiyani, Dadi Zati's HBS, had died in the nearby town of Bukhera. Bharat's tractor-trailer was sent to collect the body so that it could be buried in the Kori graveyard near Sirah. The burial of Kaya Akhiyani the most elaborate one witnessed by us, for he was a married man, a man in his prime.

Having delayed the burial overnight so as to allow all the necessary relatives to be summoned and to gather, the tractor-trailer finally made the trip from Bukera to the Sirah graveyard. It came direct from the canal road, stopping a short distance away. The bed carrying the body had already arrived by the time we reached the graveyard from Sirah village.

The bed lay to the south of the fresh grave, which had been dug in a north south direction to the south of Rama Patel's tomb. As we came



up, some young men were already digging out lumps of hard earth from a nearby bank and carrying them to the grave. The earth from the grave itself was piled on its eastern side, and these clods were placed beside this pile.

The bed was lying parallel to the grave with the head of the corpse to the north. Around this end of the bed, several women were sitting, wailing or crying quietly. The menfolk, about forty in number, sat around in clusters, waiting. Occasionally an elder would mumble a platitude, e.g., "Enough! Enough! Weep no more! We can but call on the name of Ishvar, for all things are in his hands, and our lives are given or taken by his will" (Bharat Patel).

Lavi Dungarani disturbed this scene by rising and suggesting that the rite be done. The men closed in while the women retreated. The bed was carried forward and placed on the western side of the grave. The body had been dressed in white, and a white cotton shroud was draped over it. A green bead had been placed on each eyelid, and a four anna (brass) coin inside the mouth. Various objects had been placed upon or around it on the bed: two garlands of flowers, a reel of white cotton thread, a bag of chopped coconut, a bag of sugar "bhao" sweets, a bag of biscuits, a brass bowl of wheat pudding, a packet of incense, and a tin of talcum powder. Over the shroud was spread a pink blanket which had been sprinkled with talcum powder.

The sweets, biscuits, coconut, and wheat pudding were all removed. Some of them were burnt in offering on a fire which had been lit to the north of the grave. The sweets and biscuits that remained were then scattered around the graveyard and surrounding bushes. The thread was tossed into a thorn bush to the west, along with a strip from the shroud. The talcum powder and garlands were set aside for later use.

All this being done, the men sat down again to wait. Pansa Akhiyani had climbed a small bank, and he informed us whether women were approaching. The first group of women arrived, three in number, and veiled before those present whom they had to avoid. One at a time they bowed to the foot of the bed, and then they gathered at the head. There they drew back the shroud and, emitting grief-stricken, if tuneful, wails, they touched and massaged the head of the corpse. One or two chants were distinguishable from the wailing cries, e.g., "We used to be inseparable as children, always playing together" (Haku w/o Zavo Paji).

The men, who sat round at a distance, pleaded for them to stop their sorrowing. Eventually the women complied, and retired to sit with the other women in a huddle to the south-west. Pansa warned of the approach of another group, and the party waited for them in silence. They arrived and did as the group before them had done. The last to come were those among the girls of the village who were daring enough. They came in a large group of five or six and their sorrowing was less well executed, and took less time to complete. (Later they were to ask me whether I thought they had cried well enough.)

Once again it was the turn of the men to become active. The bed was lifted, held over the grave, and circled four times over it in an anti-clockwise direction, before being placed once more on the western edge. There were calls for men to climb down into the grave itself. A boy asked where the dead man's kaka (FyB) was. Bharat Patel stepped forward and climbed down. Mothi (also FyB) was told to follow, but Lavi (ZH) said that he would, and he joined the Patel.



Then the body was slowly lowered down to them, and they laid it carefully on its shelf in the western wall, on its back with its feet to the south. The blanket was removed, as was the white shroud, a strip having been torn from it and placed at Kaya's feet. The blanket was kept, and later the quilts from the bed were wrapped in it and carried home. The shroud was thrown into a nearby bush to the west of the grave, alongside the reel of thread.

Brass coins were called for, and two five paisa pieces were passed down and tossed in by the feet. I was unable to see whether or not a lit match was to follow.

The lumps of earth were then requested, and were handed down so that the shelf could be walled up. Bharat climbed out leaving Lavi to finish off the work. The menfolk were crowded around the lip of the grave peering down, although they must have witnessed the same scene often before. Mud was asked for. The Shekhani had brought it in their headcloths from the water channel. It was handed down, one pat at a time, by Bozo. Nilo Kotwar and others gave continuous advice to Lavi as he plastered the wall up, their theme being that the enclosed shelf remain clean and tidy, and that no dirt fall on the body. All gaps were filled in, and, finally, Lavi took some dust and coated the mud plaster with it. He was then helped out by Bharat.

The bhagat was called for, and a headcloth. The latter was held by its four corners so that it covered the grave. Satruga Bhagat then stood at the north-east corner and picked up a handful of earth. There was a rustle, as all the men closed in even further, and each bent to pick up their own handful. Satruga then chanted the formula ending in the word "Om". Everyone spoke the "Om" together, and together handfuls of dirt were tossed under the cloth into the grave. The cloth was then cast to one side and those near the grave hurriedly dropped to the ground and pushed more earth into the grave with their hands. Shovels were called for. Bozo and Manzi Dungarani (B & ZH) stepped up to complete the task, piling the earth up in an oval mound over the grave, bystanders joining in the process with their advice.

We sat watching. Bharat Patel stepped past us to the tomb of his brother, the old patel. There he lit some incense and bowed.

The mound was completed, and quite a number of men then got down on their knees to tidy it up, patting and smoothing down the earth, and then piling clods on top so that the grave was well covered. Bharat then lit two sticks of incense, and walked slowly around the grave in an anti-clockwise direction, waving them over it. He completed this circle at the northern (head) end and there he stuck the glowing sticks upright in the grave. The garlands were then placed around the incense and, finally, Bharat sprinkled talcum powder over the grave, circling again in an anti-clockwise direction and placing the empty tin on the grave by the garlands. The brass bowl which had contained the pudding was left by the fire, its base having first been staved in by a blow from a shovel.

The womenfolk returned to the village, leaving the men to discuss the meaning of life and death in reverent, resigned voices. Pansa Akhiyani slipped off to worship at the old patel's tomb.

BHARAT PATEL - Cry no more! You can but do dharam. There is no great difficulty there. Five paisa worth of bhao given to the animals in the morning and in the evening is all you need to do. That is dharam. (I was not sure whether Bharat spoke for

the benefit of Kaya's ziv or for those of us present and still living.)

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Or feed rotlo to the cows.

OLD MAN (from Kaya's village) - Yes, this matter is now over and is finished with. We cry, but he has already left us. What has he taken with him? Nothing! And when he arrives they will ask him, "What could you have brought with you? Nothing, brother, nothing."

The men began to drift off, each in the direction in which his home village lay. Those who had brought Kaya lifted his bed and bedding and set off homeward. They had not yet eaten and had a six mile walk before them. Sirah's menfolk returned to Sirah, washing hands and feet in the water channel outside the village. There was no ceremony at the entrance as we trickled in quietly to our homes. [1/12/81]

## V. The Burial Explained

Let us now look to the explanations given for the various parts of the ritual.

DADI ZATU - When we bury the corpse, we first place a green bead on each eyelid, and a four anna piece inside the mouth by the left cheek. When call this four anna piece his "dan", and it is placed there so that it won't be lost. It is the rupa dan (face offering). [16/5/82]

This offering was found to be placed there so that it could be taken with the ziv as money for the journey. It was not the only offering made, however.

DADI ZATU - In the old days, everything went with the corpse into the grave. But now the shroud is tossed into the bushes, and the beggars go off with it. [16/3/82]

MAMA SAHADEVA - We toss the shroud into the bush along with the thread - this is used to tie together the two coconut halves brought on the bed. Then anyone who wants to can take it. Beggars take it, and so do Sindi.

DADI ZATI - Do they, indeed?

MAMA SAHADEVA - Yes they do! Did you not see that man from Tamir wearing one as a turban, and wandering around with it on? [29/12/81]

SANDO ZANDARIYA - The strip of cloth torn from the shroud is the offering for the earth. The shroud is thrown into a tree at the burial. [28/5/82]

The strip of shroud and the money, then, go with the body as offerings to help it on its journey. The thread itself is that which is used to tie up the coconut which is burned in offering in the graveside fire, along with portions of the other sweet items brought.

MAMA SAHADEVA - The coconut is burned in the fire along with the pudding. At Kaya's burial there were also bags of sweets. After offering some on the fire, Radhu (Akhiyani) insisted on scattering them around for the animals to eat. But some disapproved, for were there not children amongst whom they could have been distributed later? [29/12/81]

Who, then, are the sweet items burned in offering for?

MAMA SAHADEVA - The pudding is to feed the deceased, and is supplied by his household.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - The brass bowl is whole when it is given to the deceased. Its broken later, when the ziv has departed.

DADI ZATI - Otherwise, if it were left whole, the wandering ascetic might pinch it. [1/12/81]

So far the explanations have been fairly altruistic. Rites have been performed and items offered which are to be used by the ziv on its journey, or so that it does not arrive empty handed. The apparent contradiction between this and the view expressed by the old man at Kaya's burial merit discussion, however. An opposition can be seen to exist within the burial ritual which ties in with the more general one between that which is considered "traditional" and that which is considered "modern".

To the bhagat there is little to be achieved by storing up wealth in your current life, for nothing can be taken with you when you die. This was summed up in the speech of the old man at Kaya's graveside. Yet there is the popular belief that what is offered at the grave accompanies the ziv on its journey into its next life. This was often assumed in the explanations of burial ritual.

To the bhagat the important things when you die are the good deeds you have done. Traditionally, however, burial presents the opportunity for material wealth to be donated to accompany the ziv. The Bhakti approach

is the strictly "fundamental" one, whereas the tradition it is competing with allows a degree of liberality in its interpretation of the cosmic mechanism of rebirth.

There is the other side to the burial ritual, however, which also illustrates that the divide between the two views discussed above is by no means clearcut.

DADI ZATI - The bhagat say that a plate of wheat pudding has to accompany the corpse to the grave. If none is given then they say that the hands of the wife will burn up, and she herself will not be able to eat. [18/4/82]

What is this that threatens the well-being of the wife? Divine judgement, or enmity of a more directly personal nature?

JNY - Why is a clay pot taken to the grave?

KANU PAJI - It is taken empty, and is broken when the body is buried. This is so that the ziv can have a water pot for drinking. Salt is also taken, and grain is scattered around for the birds. [6/6/82]

Kanu's explanation can be described as offhand when it is set against that of a visitor from the Hurani Zach.

HURANI - It is just an old custom of ours. It does not really mean anything. (He thought over it in fond embarrassment.) What happens is that a mixture of salt, grain, and chopped up straw is scattered around the grave and behind the burial party as it returns to the village. This is to prevent the ziv from returning to haunt the house.

The clay pot and the thread are taken there. The thread is used to tie up the coconut, which is broken and offered in the fire. What remains can be eaten by those who are not close relatives. The clay pot is filled with burning dung coals as the bier leaves the village. It accompanies the bier to the graveyard, where it is broken.

HADHU VEAN - It is so the ziv can keep warm at night in the graveyard.

ZOMI - Don't be so ridiculous!

HURANI - All the things used at the burial are left at the graveyard. If they were taken back home this would encourage the ziv to return for them. [6/6/82]

What at first sight may have appeared to be done for the sake of the ziv, can now be seen to also be done to prevent its return or

displeasure. These dual themes can be found in the rites following the burial, (as well as in funeral ritual, as we shall see below), such as the offerings made at the grave on the third day.

NANI - On the third day after the death some boiled grain is taken to the grave and left. Then the household gives the whole village tea to drink. [16/5/81]

MAMA SAHADEVA - A glass of milk and a plate of millet or sesame oil are always left at the grave by the brother or son on the third day after the burial. We call this "millet rice". It is cooked in rice in a big pot, and the rest is then fed to the village children. [29/12/81]

NANI - Food is taken to the grave three days after burial and left there. This is our custom. Then, after the funeral feast, you are freed from all such duties.

JNY - I once saw that bidi (leaf cigarettes) had been left on the grave of a woman.

NANI - They will also have been brought there. That woman must have been a tobacco smoker. I am always using snuff, and so when I die some snuff will be brought to my grave. [21/1/82]

We can see variety in the rites performed at the various stages after the death. Different foods seem to be offered, or different explanations are given. There is an inevitable amount of disorganisation at the burial, much more so than at the viva, possibly due to the relatively sudden requirements of the former compared with the well-laid plans of the latter. Disorganisation is acknowledged in the discussions which follow burials. Nevertheless, certain general structures remain, despite variations in content, and the two aforementioned themes which motivate are ever-present, as can be seen in the following discussion of the burial "Om".

The burial "Om" poses a problem which was never fully investigated.

JNY - When you used to burn the dead, did you do the "Om" then with handfuls of earth?

KANU PAJI - No, how could it be done? For the body was burned. It is only since we have started to bury our dead that "Om" has been done. I do not know why we changed our customs. [5/6/82]



Kanu was, at this time, a youth of thirteen or fourteen years, and it was unlikely that he possessed more than second hand knowledge of this change in ritual. Exactly how the "Om" was performed at cremation, or whether it was performed at all, remains uncertain. There is no doubt, however, of its function at a burial.

SATRUGA BHAGAT - Many people are ignorant. They just throw in the earth to cover the grave, and think that that is all that is necessary. But the sabath is necessary for the release of the ziv from suffering (dukh). We must recite the sabath. It is like paying the debtor's debts so as to ensure his release.

We recite the sabath, and then throw the earth. Otherwise the shade of the suffering in which the ziv will remain will strike us also. The sabath was first spoken by Kabir (i.e. founder of the Kabir Panth). It is the sabath of release (mugti). We say "Om" at the end, for we affirm that we are really one with Ishvar. [28/4/82]

Again we find the dual motives. The sabath is recited to obtain the release of the ziv, but if the ziv does not obtain release, and continues to suffer, then those who bury the body will suffer also. When we take account of the visual imagery in the recital of the "Om", we see the headcloth held low over the mouth of the grave, as a barrier to prevent escape back into the world of the living. The final utterance of "Om" is followed by frenzied activity as the cloth is whipped aside and more earth is frantically pushed into the grave. We can presume that the "Om" gives the ziv final release from suffering inside the body, but that precautions are taken to ensure that it continues on its journey into another life, and does not remain at large where it might trouble the villagers.

The rites are performed for the sake of the dead, but also for the protection of the living. The dangers of death to the living appear to be of two kinds. Firstly, there is the impurity of death.

DADI ZATI - The water is sprinkled to purify the people. It is done after the burial. When the men return from the burial and before they enter the village they are all sprinkled with pure water (usually water from a brass vessel in which has been dipped the tail of a cow). A boy waits to sprinkle the men when they return. The women do not go to the burial, but they do go and have a bath. [16/5/81]

A disassociation from the impurity of death is required, therefore, before the routine of daily life can be returned to. The main danger

which we have seen recognised, however, is that the ziv might return to trouble the village. It is the family of the deceased which has the chief responsibility for the burial and funeral rites, and it would be safe to presume that the family bears the chief burden of danger from a dissatisfied ziv.

This casts a light of explanation on the abstinences and sacrifices performed by the family after a death. For several days they do not make tea nor cook. After the burial of Mira, black tea was made at Zavo's house, and served by Mothi, the father's, DH, while other households prepared a meal for the burial party. Mothi and his household were the first to be served. They had not eaten nor drunk since before the death had occurred. Similarly, Kaya's burial party had not eaten nor drunk since before his death the previous day. The family is also obligated to perform acts of service to the village as a whole. After taking food to the grave on the third day, for example, the family must invite the whole village for tea. And in the past this was not all that was required either.

DADI ZATU - They used to have to cook rice and/or kill a goat. But now we Kori have the custom of giving tea. For the first three days only black tea is drunk, although the children sometimes get theirs with milk. [16/5/81]

From performing its own personal abstinence and sacrifice, the family then draws in its relations for the corporate sacrifice of the funeral.

## VI. The Funeral - Factors Influencing Change

Tradition dictates that the Kori funeral rites must be performed, after a death and burial, for the sake of the ziv of the deceased. Here Bhakti comes into its own, for it lays claim to knowledge of the true path, and, through devotion, of the most direct method of achieving dharam, and thereby guaranteeing rebirth to a higher plane. Confusion arises, however, over the method of manufacturing this dharam on the behalf of the deceased, and the Kori are in the process of changing their view as to how funeral rites are best performed. The Moriya Pat, the traditional ritual, is being replaced by the Gita Pat, the more fashionable ritual which is based on the complete reading of the Gita.

This situation has been compounded by the rapid increase in affluence of the Kori as a caste. This has prompted the passing of the old style "Kharas" ("expense"), which involved the funeral feast being paid for by reciprocal donations from the guests - on the same basis as payments made at a Kori wedding. The Kharas is being slowly replaced by the Bhao, where the full expenses of the funeral ~~are~~ borne by the family of the deceased, should they be able to afford it.

	'TRADITIONAL'	'MODERN'
RITE	<u>Moriya Pat</u>	<u>Gita Pat</u>
FUNDING	<u>Kharas</u>	<u>Bhao</u>

This pressure upon what is a fundamental institution in Kori social life, and a pillar of Kori belief, causes much misunderstanding, and the vocabulary of the funeral ritual is as confused as the understanding of most of the Kori themselves. The word "Bhao" is often used synonymously with "Gita Pat", and "Kharas" with "Moriya Pat". But this usage is by no means universal or consistent. Nor is it practical, for Kharas often still accompany Gita Pat. The fact that, unlike weddings, women do not often travel to funerals unless they are closely related makes matters worse, for often what is spoken of by them is second-hand evidence thickened with memories of past funerals which have taken place in their village.

We have already seen the confusion surrounding the rites of disposal of the body, where the Kori identity is threatened by their inferior standing in the eyes of their dominant Muslim neighbours. It would be too simplistic to claim that all collective "beliefs" are the result of pressures from such political/economic forces, for beliefs themselves influence these forces, which influence the beliefs in turn. Our understanding of their beliefs, therefore, is unlikely to be comprehensive, and different currents of influence at all levels must at least be acknowledged to exist, if not taken into account.

One could not dismiss the changes taking place in the Kori funeral rite as being caused merely by changes in the economic and political sphere in which the Kori exist, although such shifts have, no doubt had something to do with the changes under way. Fashion in belief is a constant ebb and flow, maintaining a momentum of change which perpetuates itself and is fed by many different and differing forces. What is of interest to us is the way the collective belief of the Kori adjusts to accommodate the substance of change while at the same time striving to maintain a respectable body of tradition. The integrity of the group must be balanced against the integrity its world-view.

## VII. The Purpose of the Funeral

With this balance in mind, we will now look at the changing Kori funeral ritual. Whether it is the Gita Pat or the Moriya Pat which is performed, and whether it is a Kharas that is staged or a Bhao, one belief is beyond question. This is the belief that dharam must be done for the ziv of the deceased. Why? The answers expose the dual motives which we have already found at the burial

BHARAT PATEL - When someone dies, then their family must perform a Kharas, or Bhao, in their name. Be it their brother, or kaka (FyB), or daughter, a Bhao must be performed. Otherwise, when the ziv of the deceased goes before Ishvar, Ishvar will ask, "What has been sent after you?" When we have a Bhao, it is for the dharam of the deceased, so that it receives a good place (i.e. after rebirth). [5/5/82]

LAKSHAMN ADI'HRA - We perform Moriya Pat because our ancestors did it before us and showed us how. It is written in the Gita. There must have been some big papi (cf. "sinner") who died and it had to be performed for them. And it has continued ever since. [1/5/82]

Ramshi's reasoning on this matter was more picturesque.

RAMSHI VARESA - If a man dies and no Bhao is given, then Ishvar's door remains shut. For, will Ishvar not ask, "What has been given for you?" [28/7/81]

The implications of what would happen if dharam was not done for the ziv of the deceased exposes a second, less altruistic, motive for

performing the funeral rites.

BAPU AGISANI - When a person dies, their ziv (athma) wanders around the house until the Kharas or Bhao is held. [30/4/82]

Dadi Zati explained in greater depth.

DADI ZATI - Unless a feast is given, and Gita Pat done in the name of the deceased, then it will not leave. It will not be able to go to Ishvar. Tonight there will be a Kharas for Bapu's banevi (ZH). At the moment his ziv is wandering around its village. Were the Kharas not given, the ziv would remain. That is how cannibals and ghosts come to exist. The ziv will stay to trouble those it was close to: its brother, wife, or children. It will send them bad dreams and trouble them until they join it in death. Only then will it depart. [1/6/82]

Whatever the motives for the giving of the funeral feast and the performance of the funeral rites, the achievement of dharam for the deceased's ziv is the accepted goal. This achievement is not limited to the actual funeral, but begins long before at the graveside where, as we saw, the "Om" was recited for this very purpose.

#### VIII. The Build-up to the Funeral Feast

If possible, the burial takes place on the day the death occurs, and the date of the burial has some bearing on the date of the funeral.

BHIKO THE SILVERSMITH - This is what happens at the Gita Pat. When there is a death, the family goes to see a Brahman. He will then "look up" the Kharas, in the same way that the lagan is "looked up" for the wedding. The date is set, and on that day the bhagat is seated (cf. Ganesh) and the diva is lit. The diva is then burned every night, for twelve nights if the deceased is a man, and for thirteen if she is a woman. It is the duty of the family to keep it burning.

When it is a Moriya Pat that is being performed, then the diva is burned, but no bhagat is seated. [25/4/82]

Although there is a remarkable similarity between this temporal structure and that of the viva, there remained some confusion as to whether the date of the Kharas was set by the Brahman, or merely determined by the date of the burial. The latter view was held by Nani, and supported more and more by others in the course of research (see also Freed & Freed 1980:509).



JNY - How many days after the burial does the Kharas take place?

NANI - Twelve days for a man and thirteen for a woman. You could call in a bhagat with his chart, but it is possible just to count the days on your fingers. [21/4/82]

Let us return to the burning of the diva.

DADI ZATI - The diva is burned for the ziv so that it drinks up the ghi. It may drink up to half a ser - whatever is burned up. The diva is kept burning all night, and is continually topped up with ghi.

DADI ZATU - So that the ziv remains happy.

DADI ZATI - Otherwise the ziv will stay to trouble the house. It will scare the children, and taking the form of a dog or a cat, will jump down on top of people. [1/6/82]

We have seen that, even in the days preceeding the Kharas, the Gita Pat differed from the Moriya Pat in that the latter involved the diva only, whereas the former required the seating of a bhagat so that the Gita might be read. The following conversation, however, describes rites which both held in common, for both still are accompanied by a funeral feast.

JNY - At the feast, is it necessary to serve something sweet?

MAMA SAHADEVA - Savoury as well as sweet food can be provided. Rice with lentils, or such like. But something sweet must be included, otherwise people will laugh at your meanness.

JNY - Is some of the food served also set aside for the grave?

NANI - Yes, a plate of wheat pudding will be kept in a clay pot with a lit diva. The diva will then be kept burning all night by the women, be they daughters or wives, who will take it in turns to sit up, two or three at a time, and top up the ghi. Then, in the morning, the plate is taken to the grave by a man or a boy of the household. After this the morning meal is served. [21/4/81]

## IX. The Moriya Pat

Having kept the ziv in comfort for the days prior to the pat, it is hoped that it will gain release from the pat's performance. (pat scriptural lesson or sacred diagram. See also Sharma 1978b:65) I was unable to witness the actual performance of a Moriya Pat, although there was no

shortage of details about what took place.

MAMA SAHADEVA - When the bhagat performs the (Moriya) Pat, three beds are arranged to form an enclosure, with the fourth side open. This is the east side. The legs of the bed are on the outside.

NANI - We drape silk or cotton shawls and (wives) blouses over the beds. Mens' loincloths can also be used.

JNY - Can this rite not be performed in a house?

MAMA SAHADEVA - No! It must be performed in a clearing. This is our custom. Twelve pots of water, on top of each of which has been placed one rotlo and a lump of raw sugar, are placed around the inside of the beds. Afterwards, these are given to the daughters of the zach. [21/4/81]

Dadi Zati went into more detail.

DADI ZATI - The pots were left until everyone had eaten and then they were taken by the zach girls. They ate the rotlo and sugar, or, if they wished, they fed it to the dogs. They would take the pots out past the village entrance, out past the effigy of Hanuman, and pour out the water. These pots would never be brought back into the village, for they were Kharas pots, and we never use Kharas pots ourselves. [18/5/82]

MAMA SAHADEVA - A doll is made from grass and wrapped up in a cloth - white if it is a man, and red if it is a woman. This is meant to be the one who has died. It is placed in a clay kneading bowl and faced to the east. One by one everyone comes and pours four handfuls of water into its mouth. (He demonstrated this pouring, using his right hand grasped at the wrist by the left.) This water has a little milk mixed in with it. Of course, it just goes through the doll into the bowl, and afterwards it is thrown away. People also put money into the bowl - four or eight anna or a rupee. The bhagat collects this afterwards and off he goes (he laughed ironically).

While all this is going on, the bhagat is doing "Om" with coconut and ghi (i.e. burning them over a fire accompanied with mantra).

JNY - What does he say?

MAMA SAHADEVA - I do not know. I never understand it anyway. [21/4/81]

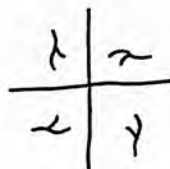
Zakal attended the Kharas which was held on the death of her mother, while we were her next door neighbours. It was the first time she had ventured outside Sirah for a long time, for she was a bad traveller, and she was therefore full of her experiences of the outside world. Although

the ritual she described was verified by others as being the Moriya Pat, she often claimed it to be the Gita Pat, indicating the confusion of terms in this area of Kori life.

ZAKAL - My mother's Kharas had a Gita Pat performed. It used to be that another kind of pat was performed, but I myself have only witnessed the Gita Pat. This is what happened... (She settled to her task, describing direct from her memory what had been imprinted there.)

In the evening all the guests were fed rice and wheat pudding, and some rice and pudding were set aside, and a diva was burned beside them all night. Then, in the morning the diva went out and the food was taken to the grave.

That morning three beds were placed in an upright position to form an enclosure, and silk shawls and blouses were spread over them. Sand was spread inside, and on the sand a red cloth. (She was telling this squatting on the floor, and her hands indicated a cloth of about one square yard in area.) Then the bhagat drew the pat on the cloth. He took grains of rice and made lines like this. (She demonstrated) -



While he was doing this he was speaking sabath. I do not know what he was saying.

In each of the four corners were placed carda mon, cinnamon, betel nut, a brass coin, and a rotlo. On each corner is a pot also. Rotlo were also placed on the twelve pots which lay around the inside of the beds. This made sixteen pots in all. Raw sugar was placed on these twelve pots in addition to the other things. These were all kept by the bhagat.

Then the bhagat burned the coconut in ghi, chanting continuously. As he spoke we came up one by one and placed money at the foot of the pat. Then we wound a ring of grass around our fingers and poured water from a shell onto the doll. The water was from a separate pot, and the doll lay in the kneading bowl. Having done this, we each declared the act of dharam we were going to perform. Finally the bhagat played on his pipe to show that the rite was complete.

Then, in the evening, the bhagat again drew a pat, but this time there were no beds. Instead the pat was done in the house, in the very spot where my mother had died. As in the morning, water was given. Then a thread was attached to the roof, and three cotton buds were tied to it at intervals.

DADI ZATU - This thread stretches from the roof to the

bhagat's feet. He lights it and it burns upwards.

ZAKAL - It is called the "Hak Dor". It burns up as far as the roof. Then they say, "The ziv has been released."

DADI ZATI - The bhagat never let it burn that far. They always break it before it reaches the roof. So, what is the use? If the string is broken the ziv will not gain release; if not the house will go on fire. (Dadi Zati's scepticism here reflected her belief that the Moriya Pat and Hak Dor rites were inferior to those of the Gita Pat. Natu rally, Zakal never conceded this, it being her own mother that the former rites had been performed for. Such scepticism, however, was commonplace whenever they were described.)

JNY - Were there any effigies at the pat of your mother?

ZAKAL - Yes, there were brass effigies. My mama (MB) brought them. [25/4/82]

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - At my hahu (WM)'s Kharas it was the zach dev which were placed in the middle when the pat was performed. Sometimes there is a brass effigy, and sometimes a stone. If there is nothing then the madh diva are burned. Before they left, all the members of the extended family donated money for offerings to be made to the dev. [1/5/82]

Perhaps this last revelation can tell us a great deal more about why the Moriya Pat is fast becoming unfashionable. For idol worship is looked down upon both by Bhakti and by the Islam of the Sindi. When the Kori do admit to performing the Moriya Pat, they find the words spoken by the bhagat, not the presence of the effigies, justifies this, for by these words they move into the more fashionable world of writing and the scriptures.

LAKSHMAN ADI'HRA - When the Moriya Pat is performed, it is by the mantra of the bhagat that the ziv departs. [5/5/82]

This explanation was found to be rapidly becoming part of the rite's description.

BHARAT PATEL - In the old days, - I have not witnessed one myself but my elders have - we used to have a Kharas. Then they used to "look up" the day of the "water". And, on the thirteenth day after the death, in the morning, when all the guests had feasted and gone home, the close relatives would make a doll from grass and give it water to drink. In doing this they said that they were giving the ziv of the deceased water to drink, each in turn, like this (he demonstrated with his hands). It was through the sabath of the bhagat that this was made possible.

Then, in the evening, the Hak Dor would be lit, and they would say, "Burn away! Burn away!", as it burned up to the roof. [5/5/82]

Dadi Zati had amusing memories of this latter rite.

DADI ZATI - At the end of the Moriya Pat rite they attach a string to the roof and tie several cotton pods to its length, and light it at the bottom. Then the bhagat says, "Burn away! Burn away!", and it is supposed to burn up to the roof. This is the ziv leaving the world. Once, I remember, we were all in the house when it set the roof on fire. We all rushed to get out, but not the bhagat. He stayed inside, scrabbling for his money in the kneading-bowl. (She chuckled at the memory.) There we were, trying to get him out, and him more worried about his money. [24/4/82]

## X. The Gita Pat

Let us now move on to the Gita Pat. We have seen how, after a death, the date is set for the funeral, and the bhagat is "seated", while the diva is lit and is kept burning by the women of the family.

BHIKO THE SILVERSMITH - Each day the Bhagat reads one pat from the Gita, and each day he sings four hymns. These will be hymns about sadness and loss. When the pat is read then all who are present must listen, at least with one ear.

On the night of the twelfth day the feast is held for the guests, and on the morning of the thirteenth day, the ziv of the dead one is given release by the bhagat and the diva goes out for good. [25/4/82]

I later witnessed the completion of the final reading from the Gita.

The readings took place in the uthak where the bhagat had been seated. This was some distance from the house where the "water" had already been given (see below). The diva had been lit in the north-west corner of the uthak. Along the north wall were hanging six pictures of Sathiya, belonging to the host's family: three of Krishna, one of Shiva, one of Hanuman, and one of Ganesh. Before these pictures, on a small cot and on top of a quilt, was the Gita. Overhead and behind hung silk and nylon shawls and many paper decorations (see Plate IX.).

It was the final chapter of the Gita which was read. The bhagat (many more had come on the night of the feast to join in the satsang), were then each presented with garlands and with a red scarf. The morning meal followed, after which the gathering dispersed.

[26/4/82]



In addition to the reading from the Gita, there is the actual rite of the "pat", which parallels that of the Moriya Pat. This takes place prior to the final reading from the Gita described above. When I witnessed this rite I was struck by the confusion of those taking part. They were as unsure of themselves as they were eager to learn this new rite, and throughout its performance they needed the constant reassurances and coaxing of the bhagat, Khori Dah (eB of Devi Dah), who was setting things up (see plate X.).

The rite was taking place in the verandah of the house of the deceased. The floor had been plastered, and a square hearth dug in its centre in which burned dung coals, along with chips of mango tree. The offerings were to be burned on this. Three quilts had been folded and placed to the north, east, and south. The bhagat seated himself on the south side and drew the diagram with pink dye.

KHORI DAH - This diagram is called the "Jagive nu pat" (pat of the world). It came originally from Anand (cf. heaven).

Four brass lota of water were then placed, one on each corner, and were attached to each other with white thread to form an enclosure. One lota was found to leak, and had to be replaced by another. This caused the threads to become tangled and broken, but the bhagat did not seem to mind. Three incense sticks were stuck into the ground in each corner inside the enclosure. Finally, sheets of newspaper were spread on the east and west sides, beyond the threads, and a mixture called "havan" was spread upon them.

The havan was the mixture to be offered on the coals. Khori Dah dictated the following list of its contents to me from his small notebook.

- 1 coconut
- 1 rupee's worth of sugar
- 1 rupee's worth of frankincense
- 1 rupee's worth of red dye
- 1/8th ser of sesame
- 1 chatank of millet

The bhagat explained to me that ten items were necessary for the rite to be performed properly. In addition to the six listed above, the following were essential.

- 1 silver bracelet
- 1 cloth - for wrapping up the Gita
- 1 reel of white thread
- 1 bundle of incense sticks

Nine yards of white cotton were also needed as gifts for the bhagat.

Having set up the complex and checked the time, Khori Dah called for the sons of the deceased to come forward. "Come along! Take up the water!" he cried. Three sashes of white thread had been previously prepared, and these were placed over the right shoulders and under the left arms of these men. The bhagat then placed a red tili on their

foreheads, chanting "Hari om" all the while. (This donning of the "sacred thread" has an interesting parallel in Bengal where Nicholas - 1967 - finds that, in order to perform certain annual rites in what is normally an egalitarian society, officiating villagers don the sacred thread so as to legitimise their rites with the sanction of caste orthodoxy.)

Khori Dah then poured ghi over the coals and lit the wood, chanting aloud from his book a formula in which the words "Agni" (Fire Goddess), "Suriye" (the Sun), and "Om" were prominent. He asked the brothers to light the incense, and then each to take a pinch of havan in their right hand. He chanted again. With the final "Om swaha" he poured more ghi onto the flames, indicating that they toss in their havan in the same motion and repeat "Om swaha" along with him. They repeated this procedure five times. Then they each placed some rupee notes on a nearby plate (for the bhagat), and took off their threads (which Khori Dah was to later burn on the fire).

Throughout these, and the proceedings which followed, Khori Dah constantly consulted his notebook, in which the formula for the rite had been encoded. The timing of the rite had also been calculated beforehand, and this structure was to be kept to.

After the three sons, it came the turn of the other male relatives, then the widow, then the remaining women and children - all who wished to were encouraged to take part. Although it was the dry havan which was being burned in offering, the idiom used was still that of the Moriya Pat, perhaps in order to aid the transition of the participants from the Moriya Pat to this new ritual which was obviously alien to most of them. "Come, sit, and give water!" was the command given by Khori Dah, although there were no dolls or kneading-bowls in sight.

Apart from the three sons, the participants only offered havan three times each. While they did this, Khori Dah chanted the following variations of his original formula. He read these from his notebook also.

Many of the womenfolk were too shy to repeat the final words along with the bhagat and the men muttered about this. Several times a woman was about to offer havan with her left hand clutching her right wrist, in the manner that water is given at the Moriya Pat. She would be ordered not to do this, for the rite was to be done properly, and it was to be disassociated from the unfashionable Moriya Pat.

Khori Dah kept checking his watch and his notebook, saying, "Hurry! Come and give water! For these proceedings must be completed by nine this morning." He would encourage the ignorant. "Place your rupees on the plate, or else promise to perform an act of dharam. It matters not which you do. But remember, this is dharam you are doing for your dead brother."

When all who had wished to had "given water", the three sons were recalled, and a plate of wheat pudding brought. The cooking of the morning meal had only just got underway and the pudding was yet half-cooked, but Khori Dah said that this did not matter. He had meanwhile shovelled the remaining havan into the fire, and followed it with the sticks of incense. The pudding was then offered five times onto the fire, and the thread from the lotas was burned along with the ghi that remained.

Khori Dah then instructed the three sons each to take up a lota. With a cry of "Shout the victory of the Sanatan Dharam", these were

emptied in unison into the fire, dousing it. The remaining lota was given to a boy and he was instructed to sprinkle the water from it onto all the houses in the village. Orders were also given for the ashes from the fire to be tossed into the nearby canal, and for the hearth itself to be filled in and plastered over.

"We have now brought the proceedings to a close", announced Khoridah. [26/4/82]

## XI. The Moriya and Gita Pats contrasted

To those who have witnessed the Gita Pat, there is a clear difference between its rites, and those of the Moriya Pat. Nevertheless the change from Kharas to Bhao creates confusion.

DADI ZATU - If you have a Kharas, then you give water. But, if you have a Bhao, then you burn an offering, and no water is given. I know this because of the funeral of so-and-so which I attended. There was one plate for money, and one of havan. Everyone took some of the havan and did "Om". No fingers were tied together to do this either.

DADI ZATI - Yes, there are no pots used these days. [25/4/82]

Dadi Zati, however, went on to argue with Dadi Zatu as to whether or not water was given, but when I mentioned the pots at the funeral of Zakal's mother they were both united in their disapproval. Here, however, we see Dadi Zati associating the Gita Pat with the Bhao, and the Moriya Pat with the Kharas. In doing this she oversimplified the changes taking place. Mama Sahadeva made no such association.

MAMA SAHADEVA - In the morning of the Bhao, or of the Kharas, after the night of satsang, the bhagat performs a rite. He sits and offers sesame oil, ghi, and some grain on the fire. There are cloths hanging up and incense is lit. After this everyone is fed. [29/12/81]

Bhiko was also more sure of himself on this subject.

JNY - Are Gita Pat performed at Bhao, and Moriya Pat at Kharas?

BHIKO THE SILVERSMITH - No! Either can be performed at the Bhao, or at the Kharas. It all depends on who the bhagat is. If he is a great bhagat, and therefore literate, he will perform the Gita Pat. But if he is gharib (humble/meek) and is illiterate, then he will only be able to do the Moriya Pat. More and more Gita Pat are performed these days. [25/4/82]





V The Manik Thamb

VI The Phera: "Watch  
you don't knock  
your crown off,  
Lada!"



VII The Hutani fire:  
the lada leads,  
the newborn sons  
follow







VIII The Wedding: the men folk wait respectfully as Devi Dah produces the lagan

IX The funeral: the reading of the final section from the Gita



X The funeral: the deceased's sons 'give water' while Khori Dah checks his notebook







When motives for discarding the Moriya Pat in favour of the Gita Pat are investigated, there is a striking uniformity of opinion. Whilst attending a funeral Bhao held at Kube, I was informed by Amari (z/o Mothi Akhiyani) that it was the Gita Pat, and not the Moriya Pat that was to be performed.

AMARI - The Gita Pat is havara ("right", as in right hand - this expression was used as a progressive, rather than an extreme, adjective. cf. kachcha/pakka). If it is performed, then there is no uncertainty. With the Moriya Pat there is the danger that the ghost will remain, while there is no such danger with the Gita Pat. The Gita Pat is a literate rite, you see. [25/4/82]

JNY - Why is the Moriya pat performed?

BHIKO THE SILVERSMITH - In the old days our people were mostly poor and illiterate. They could not read, and therefore they could not know the proper ways to perform the rituals. So they did what they thought was best. They tied beds together, and did pat, and gave the grass doll water to drink - although, of course, it was by the "Om" of the bhagat that it was possible for the water to be received. This was to contribute to the dharam of the deceased, and to ensure that its ziv would reach its destination. Now, however, we can read, and so we know better.

After the evening pat had been performed, the Hak Dor used to be burned. This rite has now been removed altogether, for the string always had to be broken by the bhagat to prevent the house burning down. And so the flame never reached the roof, and the people laughed and said, "Look! the ziv has fallen down." [25/4/82]

To the enlightened silversmith it was easy to see the weaknesses in these practices, and, indeed, he found it amazing that people had ever put so much faith in them.

BHARAT PATEL - These days Bhao are given and the Gita Pat is performed. This is the true rite. The Muslims have the Koran and we have the Gita. [5/5/82]

The new rite is therefore exalted for its authenticity. The formula by which it is performed originates from Ishvar, and it is dictated directly from the notebooks of the literate experts, the bhagat, who perform it with detailed precision. Scripture is its sanction, and certifies its truth. In contrast, the Moriya Pat is imperfect; a hit and miss affair, where there is no certainty in the rite itself, and a risky way to deal with the ziv of the deceased. Truth is the ultimate yardstick by which propriety is measured, yet Bharat hints at a deeper motive by

proudly comparing the Gita to the Koran.

As with the burning of the dead, the Moriya Pat presents a "primitive" picture of the Kori to their Sindi landlords and neighbours. But, unlike the change whereby the Kori replaced cremation with burial, the change from Moriya to Gita Pat does not directly contradict their Hinduism. Excuses offered for why burial had replaced burning fall back upon the practical difficulties involved, difficulties which have not proved insurmountable to their Kori cousins in India. With the Gita Pat there is no need for excuses. The Gita, the scripture revered by all Hindus, provides the mediating force in the change. It allows the conflict between Kori and Sindi values to be neutralised by presenting it in terms of a conflict between the old and obsolete Moriya Pat, and the efficient and modern Gita Pat. The Moriya Pat is said to be unfashionable, not because the Sindi look down upon it, but because it does not work as well as the Gita Pat.

In studying the changing patterns of village Hinduism, Sharma (1978b:53) poses the question: does change in the form of a religious act indicate a change in belief? While we are wary of her use here of the word "belief" (see 1.1), we could apply her question to the changing funeral rites of the Kori. What underlies the funeral is the accepted fact of rebirth. What is changing is what, to the Kori, are beliefs about how the funeral is best conducted. This change in practice in no way threatens the fact ( what Sharma might call belief) of rebirth.

Directly related to the changes in the funeral rites is the increased reliance this has brought about on the literate bhagat. He is now essential for the correct performance of the funeral pat, not only for the reading of the Gita, but for following the procedures of the ritual accurately.

We saw at birth how the individual ziv entered the world of the group, and how at naming the boy's membership of the zach was affirmed. We were able to sum up these early childhood rites, however, as being a celebration of the arrival of the groom, the lada, who affirmed the continuity of the group itself.

The symbolic importance of the lada to the group was seen to be highlighted throughout the marriage rite. The individuality of the lada and ladi was played down, and they became as puppets, manipulated by the kin groups they represented in this all important time of unity.

The individual's relationship with the zach mata was affirmed at the hairlock ritual and with the village, after birth and marriage, at Hutani. The festivals of Parwa and Hutani were themselves group events reaffirming the zach and the village as viable units.

The individual's initiation into the doctrines of Bhakti (3.3) stands in stark contrast to these life cycle rites. Yet at death Bhakti emerges into the arena, challenging traditional practices, and bringing its own rites into practice. In this concluding section we will focus on the theme which has recurred throughout this chapter - that of the opposition between the lifecycle of the ziv and the life cycle of the group, which it joins at birth but leaves at death.

## I. Marriage and the Group

Marriage and death have a great deal in common, not least being the life of the individual of which they are a part. Throughout this life cycle there are parallels in the structure of the rites performed. The most obvious one is the four circles which mark out life's different stages. There are the newborn son's four circles of the fire at Hutani, at his wedding, and at the first Hutani following the wedding. The daughter can only circle the fire twelve times in her entire life. Four at her wedding, four at the following Hutani, and the final four circles made by both are when they are buried.

There is also a parallel between the actual temporal structure of the funeral ritual, from death to pat, and the viva ritual. The man can undergo a viva many times, the woman only once. The man can have a Bhao given in his name many times after his death, the woman only once (3.4). As with the wedding, the funeral begins several days in advance of its climax : twelve for a man, thirteen for a woman. These days are set by the same astrological charts. With the wedding, Ganesh is seated, and a diva burned in the north-west corner of the house. With the Moriya Pat the diva of the zach dev are burned. The wedding feast must have a sweet dish served, and so must the funeral feast. At the phera ceremony, the "Brahman" burns the offering while the ladi and lada circle the fire within the four lota of water. At the Moriya Pat ceremony, the bhagat burns the offering while the family "give water" within the twelve pots of water.

DADI ZATI - "Moriya" is another word for "dhakiya" (clay pots). We also call the lada's head-wear his "moriya". He wears a moriya when he does the phera. He can phera as often as he likes. The woman, however, can only have a viva once. In one lifetime she can only do twelve circles of the fire.

JNY - Why are there twelve clay pots?

NANI - We do not know. Our elders taught us that this is how it is done. [18/5/82]

Perhaps the re-occurrence of the word "moriya", and the number twelve here are more than a coincidence, pointing to an idiom in which rites are conducted which spans the entire life cycle of the individual, from naming to funeral. But it is not just with the ritual structure that the connection with the viva rests. For, with the deceased's life coming to an end, the social relations created within that life are also effected, and chief among these are those created through the individual's marriage. That these relationships are important is reflected in the classification of who it is necessary to perform a pat of any kind for.

ZAVO PAJI - The Gita Pat is only performed for those who are married. It is done so that it can be said that dharam was done for them. For children only the Bhao is held, and there is no pat. [25/5/82]

Direct evidence supports these statements. Netha's daughter, Mira, died at three months of age.

DADI ZATU - It is only a small child, and so not much will be



done. In the evening some hymns will be sung and some bhao sweets shared out, and that will be that. For an adult, things are done on a much larger scale. [20/6/81]

Why is it important that the full funeral only be held for someone who has been married? We have seen the similarities in structure between the viva, which unites kin groups, and the funeral. Is the funeral, to which affines, as well as agnates, are invited and expected to play a part, the symbolic breaking of the wedding tie? Some traditions would appear to support this. The woman's jewelry, for example, does not belong to her, but to her affines, and must be returned on her husband's death.

NANI - If a woman's husband dies, then she must return her jewelry to her hahara (in-laws). They can keep them. If there is no-one left alive in her husband's close family, then she may give the jewelry to her own father. He must then sell it, and use the money to pay for her husband's funeral, whether it be a Bhao or a Kharas. If the father were to keep the jewelry, then the spirit (athma) of the dead man would be angry. [18/5/82]

There is also the fate of the wedding sunari, the shawl to which the wedding cord was attached, to be considered.

NANI - Whoever is the first to die of the married couple has a sunari given to them, and it goes with the bier. And when the other dies, whether they are a man or a woman, they are given a white shroud. [23/1/82]

DADI ZATU - In the old days it used to be that the first of the married couple to die actually had the sunari buried with them. You see, when they circle at the wedding mandua the lada is attached to the ladi's sunari. And when one of them dies this sunari, or another from their house, goes with the bier whether it carries the husband or the wife. When the other dies this custom does not apply. [16/3/82]

We know, however, that the married couple do not live in a vacuum, but are a part of the eternal process whereby kin groups are merged together from generation to generation. Kori kin groups are cognatically defined, and what are affines to the husband, become maternal kin to their children. A funeral held for one of the marriage partners does not prevent one being held for the other.

DADI ZATI - The Gita Pat is performed for a woman, for a widow, for anyone as long as they have been married. Otherwise only a Bhao is given. [16/5/81]

We can only really assume that the funeral complex is a continuation of what was made possible by the birth of the child, and realised at his/her wedding: the on-going relationship between kin groups. For, as with the wedding, the Kharas, or traditional funeral, involves a "counting of hands", whereby all present are expected to contribute to the expense of the event on a reciprocal basis.

DADI ZATI - At the kharas they sing all night, and then the guests pay towards the expenses - as they do at weddings. [16/5/81]

ZAVO PAJI - It used to be the case that the funeral pat would be achieved through the assistance of all present. That was the Kharas. Whatever you gave was written down, as it is with the viva. [25/5/82]

Rather than seeing the individual's death as an end to their existence as Kori, it could be seen as a natural part of the growth of their family, a family into which they were born, which benefitted from their life, which was strengthened by their marriage, and which has new resources and strength in their children. The funeral kharas is as much a celebration of this continuity as a time of mourning for the one who has died.

In group terms there is a very real contrast between marriage and death. Death is a loss to the group, and brings with it the danger from the individual's unsatisfied ziv. Whilst alive, the individual is a source of strength and security to the group. On his/her death, the chief desire of the group is to be rid of him/her as quickly as possible, by ensuring that s/he has a satisfactory rebirth elsewhere.

The individual's marriage, in contrast, is of great benefit to the group, whether in the short or in the long term, and especially so if he is a male. The benefits are soon to appear in the form of a wife and children which strengthen the agnatic lineage core within the wider consanguinal cluster. Throughout the man's life he is referred to in ritual events as the lada. Almost by accident we once stumbled upon memories of funerals as they were conducted in the past, which emphasised the man's status as lada, even at death.

OLD LADIES - The custom has now been stopped, but it used to be the case that an enclosure of cloth would be erected, like a tent, with cloth on four sides, and a cloth roof. Inside would

sit the widow with her veil over her face - otherwise people might say, "Look! Her husband dead and she doesn't even veil." Nowadays she veils for only twelve days until the kharas and sits in her house all that time wearing a red blouse. This is until she has "given water". After that she need not veil, and can wear a different blouse.

But in the old days she would sit within this enclosure and four fellow-wives would sit beside her and sing. These wives would sit with their heads uncovered and would sing and beat their breasts. Their hair would be loose, and their sunari (shawls) would be wound across their left shoulder - no men were allowed to look inside, you see. Every morning and every evening four songs would be sung -

Return, lada!  
Come back to your home!  
Yonder land is darkness, lada  
Come back to your home!

And all the other women who were with them would reply -

Yes, lada!  
Yes, lada!

If the deceased man was old, they would sing "dada" (FF - i.e. man with many sons) instead of "lada". The women would sing every day until the Kharas. [6/5/82]

JARI - The women sing this song when the man is buried. Then they sing it on the three or four days before the feast.

It is sung by four vau (wives). When my HF died there was me, The Patel's wife, Bharat's wife, and The Bhagat's wife.

The wives put on new clothes and tied their hair back and put on mascara. They sat bare headed in the enclosed area and beat their breasts. The widow would often beat her breasts until they bled.

JNY - What if it was a wife who had died?

JARI - If it was a woman who had died no-one would perform this rite. Only for the lada. But, how could he return? [17/5/82]

We can see here that past funerals emphasised the role the deceased lada played in the life of the group, playing down the importance of the rites for the individual concerned. The benefits to the group of the individual's marriage, and the dangers of his/her death are echoed in other Indian Ethnographies. In Bengal Inden and Nicholas (1977:29) find that until his marriage a man's body is seen to be incomplete. They go on to

give details of various rites of passage, samskara, undergone by males, finding that their purpose is not just to benefit the individuals concerned, but to create solidary units and relationships among groups (ibid:35). Most interesting, however, is the fact that the ten officially recognised samskara span stages from the marriage of the father to the marriage of his son (ibid:38/9). The life cycle of the group is thus seen to revolve around marriage. The deaths of individuals do not enter this ritual sphere at all.

Das's examination of the Hindu texts would appear to support this.

It is significant that, in the Hindu scheme, the rituals performed at death are not included in the category of domestic rituals. Indeed, the Hindu scheme does not consider death to be an event primarily involving the domestic group (Das 1982:8).

Phillimore (1980:111), discussing the motives for performing funeral rites in Himachal Pradesh, argues that the ceremonies themselves indicate that they are performed to be rid of the soul rather than primarily for its benefit. This theme, as we have seen, is supported by much of the Kori ethnography.

In contrasting birth and marriage rituals to those of death, Das (1980:111) finds that the danger in the former rituals is to the individuals concerned, whereas in the latter ritual it is the group which is endangered. She goes on to say that

an important part in ritual life consists in this danger arising out of the fact of death (ibid).

Das argues that the ~~chief~~ danger in death is from the liminal nature of the deceased's soul from the time it leaves the body until it joins the category of the ancestors. The impurity of the mourners for this set period of time is seen to symbolise this liminality (ibid:125). Kaushik (1976:286), along similar lines, argues that in Kashi the chief mourner, who is identified with the corpse (ibid:274), is dangerous because he links the sacred (cosmos) with the profane.

While, to the Kori, death does bring the danger of pollution, we saw (6.4) that their chief fear was that the ziv of the deceased will return to trouble them. The ethnography of the Freeds supports this.

Death aroused fear and anxiety, and concepts about it, the soul,

and ghosts were ambiguous. Mourners and the mourned were avoided to some extent through speech and other actions by the rest of society, indicating that both were in limbo (1980:508).

## II. Death and the Individual

There can be no doubt that there is a general anxiety amongst the Kori about the dangers of death. In group terms, the individual is an asset whilst alive, but an encumbrance after death. In individual terms, however, life is a struggle for spiritual merit, whereas death is a release. As with many other of the Kori customs the striking ritual inversion, where the wives mourned the loss of the lada, has been phased out. Similarly the kharas, which in a practical way re-affirms group solidarity at a time of loss, is becoming unfashionable.

BHARAT PATEL - At the kharas, all those who came would give money in the name of the deceased. This would contribute towards the expense and help the family if they were poor. But these days Bhao are given. [5/5/82]

We can see a gradual trend away from rituals emphasising the corporate life of the group towards those concentrating on the well-being of the individual, from the traditional towards the scriptural, from the corporate action to the specialist's act, and from the male/female involvement to the male only.

We saw this latter conflict arising in the changing wedding rites, where men were prone to changing the rituals which women had the responsibility of performing. These changes, however, appear superficial in comparison to those taking place at the funeral, where the Gita Pat is replacing the Moriya Pat and thus ensuring the exclusion of the grass doll and the zach mata.

While the Gita Pat may be more fashionable, the rites of the Moriya Pat have long been central to the funeral as a whole. It is interesting that, in an effort to lubricate the wheels of change, the burning of havan is even couched in the terms of the Moriya Pat as the "giving of water". Perhaps this indicates the concessions the bhagats need to make for the Gita Pat's ritual to be fully accepted.



The lack in the marriage of Devipuza, which Bhakti appears to be bent on driving from the funeral rituals, might explain why the funeral is changing far more rapidly. A more plausible reason, however, lies in the contrasting purposes of the two rituals. Marriage, which is performed primarily to strengthen the group, is outwith the concern of Bhakti. The funeral, however, is the opposite. Death is the time when all the doctrines of Bhakti come into their own, and there would be little point in a bhagat spending his whole individual life devoted to a guru and practicing Bhakti if, on his death, the zach dev were relied upon to gain him dharam. Conflict is thus inevitable. From being a rite which in the past emphasised group solidarity, the funeral is fast becoming one which concentrates on the wellbeing of the individual ziv of the deceased.

We could conclude that the change in emphasis, evident in the funeral, from the group to the individual is the inevitable consequence of the conflict inherent in that situation between a "traditional" outlook which sees the rites being part of the life cycle of the group, and the "modern" one seeing them as being part of that of the individual. In the next chapter we will look more closely at the forces which are assuring Bhakti of its success here. But, before we leave the funeral, we should remember that the loss of emphasis on the group in Kori society also means a loss to those who play the major part in group rites, the women.

ZAKAL - The Moriya Pat is much better than the Gita Pat. There is much more involvement, and there is much more satisfaction. [28/4/82]

## CHAPTER 7: FORCES OF CHANGE

In this concluding chapter we will discuss how the changes taking place in the wider society, of which the Kori are a part, are to the advantage of the individualism of Bhakti. We will also, however, discuss how they favour the collectiveness of Caste ideology.

### SECTION 7.1: CONFLICT AND COMPLEMENTARITY

A major feature which has arisen in the course of this study has been the Koris' classification of phenomena as complementary oppositions. This feature of human thought has been much commented upon by social anthropologists (e.g. Levi-Strauss 1962,1966; Needham 1962; etc.). The meaning or value of a category is derived from its relation to an opposing category.

A straightforward example of this was the way the Kori classified food. Strong foods were opposed to weak. Virility and pleasure were associated with strength, sterility and disinterest with weakness. Foodstuffs themselves were then ordered on a continuum with these values at the opposing extremes. The Kori then, should they choose to do so, can calculate the potential individual foods have for bringing about certain bodily conditions, by contrasting them with other foods on the continuum.

It was more often the case, however, that the Kori were concerned with negating a bodily condition which had caused them to fall ill. To do this they used a slightly different scheme of oppositions. Hot or cold foods were consumed in order to increase or reduce bodily heat, depending on whether the illness diagnosed was cold or hot.

The main point worthy of note here is that the values ascribed to foods depends upon the context in which they are being classified. A woman worried about her tuberculosis, for example, would be concerned about whether foods were hot or cold, not strong or weak, while the inverse would hold for a man worried about his virility. The relevance of

a complementary opposition is thus context specific.

Categorisation is not as simple as this, however, for while oppositions tend to cluster together in specific contexts, each adding to the meaning of the others, in a different context some of these oppositions might not be related to others at all. In the context of illness, for example, we have hot : cold :: active : passive :: pleasure : peace (disinterest) :: raw : purified (4.2). While, in the context of virility, pleasure : disinterest (peace) may be part of the cluster, none of the others need be relevant there at all.

The Kori world is full of choices. While at one level they may have a choice of foods, at another they have a choice of beliefs. Within Bhakti, for example, there are different sects; within Hinduism there is Bhakti and there is Devipuja; within Sind there is the Hindu Dharam, the Muslim Dharam, the Christian Dharam, and several other recognised paths to enlightenment.

Dumont has argued that Hindu thought comes to terms with such heterogeneity by categorising potentially contradictory beliefs as complementary, and therefore necessary, oppositions (Dumont 1970a,1970b). Pocock uses a similar approach when he pieces together the past of the Patidar of Gujarat (Pocock 1973:Ch4). Yet he goes on to argue that there is a trend away from such heterogeneity towards a homogeneous ideal (ibid:Ch7). Bhakti is becoming the dominant belief in a changing society where traditional ties of caste are fast becoming redundant. Rather than complementing each other, the Patidar see their beliefs contradicting each other. It is therefore of interest to us whether this is also the case with the Kori. In this section we will revise the different Kori beliefs, and discuss how the contexts in which they are contrasted with each other by the Kori determines the relative values ascribed to them.

## I. Opposing Beliefs, and their Related Practices

We shall begin this discussion by briefly drawing on the ethnography. Chapter 2 was chiefly a discussion of what the Kori consider to be fact. We explored the facts of rebirth, purity, and knowledge. In Chapter 3,

however, we considered Bhakti, which they consider a belief, or a path to enlightenment. Then in Chapters 4 and 5 we came across beliefs which the Kori openly oppose to Bhakti.

In 4.1 the various specialists who could be consulted if the Kori wished to counter misfortune or illness were discussed. While these specialists included herbalists, bone-setters, Pir, and doctors, they were typified by the Kori in the master of ilim, the jadhuwara, and the archetype jadhuwara was the bhopa whose spells utilised the power of the mata. We noted, however, that the bhagat was absent from this area of life. The concern of the bhagat was with the future, whereas the concern of the bhopa was with the present.

In 4.3 further oppositions emerged to be added to the cluster. Bhopa from the untouchable Bhangi (sweeper) caste were seen to possess the strongest jadhu. Thus low caste impurity was shown to be associated with the practices of the bhopa, and opposed to the high caste ideals and practices of the bhagat. In the concluding section of Chapter 4 we saw how, while both bhopa and bhagat observed certain prescribed lifestyles, the former did this so as to enhance his earthly power while the latter did so to enhance his spirituality; the former acquired power through being possessed by his mata, the latter acquired spirituality by emptying himself into Ishvar. The opposition between bhopa and bhagat was, in one sense and in the latter's terms, summed up where the demands of the mata for sacrifice were contrasted with the vegetarianism of Bhakti. The bhopa was associated with pap while the bhagat was associated with dharam.

Another opposition emerged from our discussion of Hachmo in Chapter 5: that of the traditional, as opposed to the modern way of doing things. The enthusiasm and endeavour of the women performing the traditional rites of Hachmo stood in contrast to the scepticism and disinterest of the men. While Kori women spoke of the glories of the past, Kori men scorned it in favour of the hopes they had for the future.

5.2 brought a different cluster to the fore. The festival of Divali was followed in ritual sequence by Parwa. Thus the "orthodox" festival celebrating the great tale of the Satiya with sweetness was followed on the Kori new year morning by the festival celebrating the "unorthodox" zach mata with sacrifices. In 5.4, within the category of dev/mata, we

found the situation further complicated by the existence of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian mata: the former associated with dharam, the latter with pap.

Before going on to discuss the implications of these oppositions, it is worth mentioning the parallels which occur between opposed areas of belief. In a sense, opposing Kori beliefs have more in common than they would acknowledge; not in their content but in their form. In comparing the manners in which different beliefs and related practices are given meaning, it is possible, to a limited extent, to derive some of the underlying facts which are taken for granted.

The ideal example which illustrated this was when in Chapter 4 the bhopa was contrasted to the bhagat. Knowledge, as a source of power made accessible through a teacher, was emphasised in the practices of both the bhopa and the bhagat. The bhopa learned secret jadhu from his teacher having first undergone a rite of initiation. His own effectiveness was then dependent upon him observing certain rules of conduct also prescribed by his teacher. The bhagat learned his secret sabath from his guru having undergone a rite of initiation. The effectiveness of his efforts to acquire spirituality was then dependent upon him observing certain rules of conduct prescribed by his guru. In both cases, knowledge, whilst a source of power and therefore a valuable commodity, was dispensed and controlled by the teacher.

## II. Context of Use

In the introduction to this section we argued that the value of the complementary opposition, as an intellectual device, was determined by the context in which it was used (see also Bourdieu 1977:109). While this context might be obvious to the Kori and therefore go without saying, it needs to be made explicit by the ethnographer if understanding is to be achieved.

Our examination in Chapter 6 of life cycle rites brought two different contexts to the fore: concern for the group and concern for the individual. (Sharma also finds this dichotomy useful in studying Hindu thought - 1978b:59-60) The former concern favoured the traditional rituals



and the zach mata; the latter favoured the modern rituals and Bhakti (Dumont has commented on the individualism of Bhakti - 1970b:56). Here we also saw a change taking place, for what had been a sequence of rites performed primarily for the welfare of the group, was becoming a sequence performed for the welfare of the individual. The needs of the group were being gradually subordinated to those of the individual. The participation of men and women in rites was being replaced by that of men only, and men with specialist knowledge.

The two concerns highlighted in Chapter 4 are of equal importance as contexts of categorisation: concern for the present and concern for the future. Sharma has explored the different types of reasoning used in Kangra to explain misfortune and suffering, contrasting the doctrine of Karma with, for example, sorcery (Sharma 1978a:31). She asks whether these are separate conceptual systems in operation (ibid:38). Yet she does not appear to consider in full the relative applications of these different reasonings. While to the Kori sorcery (mut) is a matter for the present, Karma (dharam) is a matter for future (or past) lives.

The Kori might in one situation be concerned with having power over their future life, in another they might wish power over their present. In the former they would contrast dharam favourably with pap. The guru, as a means of access to knowledge of dharam would be preferred to the dev, and therefore the bhagat would have the advantage over the bhopa. The bhagat's lifestyle, which seeks spirituality, preferring peace to pleasure, and avoiding the pap of meat, would be favoured to that of the goddess worshipper, whose association with sacrifice taints him with pap. The modern, scripturally based, doctrines of Bhakti would be favoured over the traditional, less well informed practices of Devipuza.

Should the Kori wish power over their present situation, however, they will turn to the zach mata rather than to the guru, and to the bhopa rather than the bhagat. For the jadhuwara, although powerless over the future, gears his energies into developing power over the present.

### III. Forces of Influence

While the concerns of the present are immediate, those of the future are somewhat removed. It is necessary, therefore, for Bhakti to make its area of concern of immediate relevance to the Kori. To do this it makes use of values which are of relevance to the present. It is to its advantage that it is associated with high caste practices, and bhagat encourage notions of Devipuza being low caste and backward, and thus being a threat to Kori status.

Here we are confronted by a major influence on the Koris' categorisation of beliefs: group status. The Kori, it must be remembered, inhabit a world from which high caste Hindus have removed themselves, and where Sindi Muslims are the dominant political and economic force. The position the Sindi ascribe to the Kori in society is as relevant to the Kori as their position in the eyes of the other Hindu castes. It thus has a bearing on the beliefs they claim to adhere to.

A second major influence of Kori categorisation is their increasing affluence. They recognised that, compared to their present position, their past was one of relative poverty.

DADI ZATI - Not all that long ago, when my eldest daughter - who now has grandchildren of her own - was all the family I had, we Kori were much poorer. Hardly any of us had land to work, and those that did were considered well off. There was not much cultivable land at all then. We earned what we could by labouring. If a man could afford it he would have a donkey for his children to ride on, and his wife would be able to carry all the family possessions on her head: a pot for water, a kneading bowl, a rolling board and pin, and a few dishes.

We would spend one day in one village and move on the next, asking where work could be found. The men would dig with their spades, and we women would spend all day carrying earth and building up the canal banks. Even so we would only earn enough to buy wheat for our chapatti. We had only the ground to sleep on.

Since the canals have been dug we have been much better off as more land has become available. Now landowners even give leases. Before we Kori would work ourselves to death. We were like the Sindi who come here every year looking for labouring work. We would cut wheat, do weeding, anything. [16/3/82]

The degree of control which the Kori possess over their present circumstance bears direct relation to their economic security. Whilst

remaining a marginal group in Sindi society, they have been able to benefit from its growing prosperity. Canal irrigation guarantees them an annual income from their crops, while the eradication of smallpox and the growing availability of modern medicines, at a price, has reduced their fear of illness. As their affluence increases their dependence on the group decreases, as does their dependence on the bhopa. Increasing affluence is thus effecting change.

#### IV. The success of Bhakti

Against this background we must now ask why it is that Bhakti has had such widespread impact on the Kori. The growing affluence of the Kori is a major factor favouring Bhakti. With growing economic security comes a growing independence. This in turn leads the Kori to be more concerned about the individual than the group, and about their future circumstance rather than their present one, over which they have increasing control.

Bhakti, with its emphasis on the individual, appeals to the Kori's emerging independence. We saw in Chapter 3, for example, that the dharam gained through Bhakti often depended upon the amount of time and money which the individual could afford to spend on it. To meet the economic demands of a guru one had to be financially secure. To host a Bhao one had to be rich. In Chapter 6 we saw the funeral kharas, with its shared expense, being replaced, among those who could afford it, by the funeral Bhao.

The historical context of the Kori also favours Bhakti. Having always practised "unorthodox" Hinduism in the form of zach mata worship and other local rites and practices, this has in the past been complemented by their practice of the "orthodox" Hinduism of the higher Hindu castes of Sind. In a continuous process of change, the one would influence the other. At Partition, however, the high caste Brahman and Vaniya were replaced by the Sindi. While there is nothing the Kori can do about the Sindis' political dominance, Islam is contrary to, rather than complementary to, their Hinduism, and has had to be rejected.

The gap has been filled by Bhakti. While it provides the necessary complement to the Koris' local Hinduism, this does not mean that it is

similar to the high caste "orthodoxy" it has replaced. Indeed, Dumont contrasts the guru to the brahman, seeing the Bhakti sects adopting the role of the renouncer in Hindu society, as opposed to the worldly values of the brahman (Dumont,1970b:58). Pocock contrasts the anonymous soul of the orthodox doctrine of Karma with the individualised soul of Bhakti (Pocock,1973:23-4).

It is important, however, to realise that Bhakti has not been successful because of its similarity to the Hinduism of the high castes, but because, in the absence of the latter, the former provides an adequate substitute which can mediate between the koris' local ("tribal") beliefs and the Islam of the politically dominant Sindi. Whilst the Kori can look up to, and thus be influenced by, Bhakti, they cannot, without rejecting Hinduism altogether, look up to the beliefs of the Sindi. How they come to terms with their social status in relation to the Sindi will be discussed in the next section.

While the Kori have no respect for the beliefs of the Sindi, this does not mean that they cannot be influenced by them. We have already seen in our discussion of cremation and burial in Chapter 6 how this is so. The direct influence of Islam upon their beliefs and practices was evident in other areas also. There was, for example, their replacement of decapitation by throat slitting at the sacrifice of animals. In general we found a diminution in the size and popularity of the Koris' annual Hindu festivals. Hutani according to Ramzi Mahaleyo, was not the great event it used to be (6.3). Memories of past celebrations of Parwa reduced Shavo Bhopa to tears (5.3). The Hindu practices of the Kori can thus be seen to be keeping a lower profile than it had in the past.

Indirectly, the Muslim scorn of Hindu polytheism was countered by Bhakti (5.4) with its doctrine of Ishvar, the Supreme Being (3.1). The Muslim reverence for scripture was paralleled in the Gita of the bhagat, and in his reverence for literacy (2.3). Sindi beliefs and practices were often used openly as sanctions for their Kori equivalent. Hadhu Vean, for example, explained to me that the Hachmo festival was the Kori Eid (5.1), and this was common when festivals in general were referred to. Even within Bhakti we found the practices of the Sindi often used as a yardstick, for example, in measuring the value of the Gita, and of the bhagat's daily rituals (3.2,3.3).

To return to our question concerning the impact of Bhakti, we can see that, whilst increasing affluence has supported its growth, its success cannot be divorced from the dominance of the Sindi following the departure of the high caste Hindus. Bhakti mediates between the Kori and the Sindi, for it allows the former to be influenced by the latter without incurring the status loss of having to acknowledge this. It must be said, however, that the success of Bhakti should not be explained solely in these terms, but rather that they have contributed to it.

A second question which now needs consideration is why Bhakti has influenced only certain areas of Kori belief and practice. Why, for example, has it had such an impact upon their funeral rites, and so little impact on their weddings?

Here it is important to consider the context in which Bhakti is appropriate. Bhakti is the concern of the individual, and is of relevance to his/her future well-being. It is not the concern of the group and has little relevance for the present. We saw (6.5) that the wedding was chiefly a celebration of the life cycle of the group. While this was also the case with past funerals, with increasing affluence there is less reliance upon the group and more emphasis on the individual and his/her future. A major conflict was therefore being resolved in the changing funeral rites. While in the past the funeral had been seen chiefly as a time for re-affirming group solidarity in the face of danger from the departed ziv, it was more and more seen as the beginning of the future of the individual. In contrast, the wedding was no threat to either the group or the individual, and both benefitted from it.

Another major potential conflict between group and individual interest is the Koris' ideology of caste. As a traditional system of social organisation based on group solidarity and orthodox "high caste" notions of hierarchy, caste opposes the individualistic and egalitarian ideals of Bhakti. Yet we have already mentioned that the bhagat equate their own with high caste practices, in opposition to the low caste practices of the bhopa. In the following section we shall explore the Koris' ideology of caste and its implications for Bhakti.



## I. The Categorisation of Other Groups

Although the state of the Kori has improved, the overall state of Hindus in general is said by them to have deteriorated since the partitioning of India, after which many Vaniya and other high caste Hindus lost their land to the Muslims and left for India. There is a tendency, when speaking of the Sindi/Hindu division, for the Kori to equate themselves with the high caste Hindus of old.

DADI ZATI - The Vaniya used to own all this country and the Sindi were afraid of them. The Vaniya ate with us and we ate with them. We ate with the Brahman also, but there are no Brahman in Pakistan now, they have all gone to our homeland...

When the Vaniya were in power we did not eat with the Sindi. We Hindus kept well apart. Now things are different, and we Kori and Vaniya drink tea in the Sindi tea shops. If the Vaniya refuse, they are beaten up. [16/4/82]

BURO BHOPA - The Sindi have now put us to defeat. They are the victors. It did not use to be so. There used to be many Vaniya here, and many Brahman. The Brahman are the highest of all. They do not eat with us. They never did, especially those in India where they are still True. True Brahman will not even eat red onions as they say that they look like meat. They will not eat any red foods.

We, on the other hand, have fallen greatly. We have no-one to lead us. We go to the bazaar to buy goat's meat, and the cunning Panjab mix in beef or anything. And the foolish Kori say that as long as they do not see the Panjabi actually doing it it does not really matter. [23/10/81]

With regard to the Kori's past, there appears to be a tendency, especially among the young, to disregard their poverty and emphasise their equivalence with the high caste Hindus of old. Together with a relative of his, Zavo once produced the most logical compromise of the historical facts.

ZAVO PAJI - We Kori really are Rajput, you know. It is just that it is the habit of the country we are living in to call us "Koli". It is because we did labouring.

RELATIVE - This is how it came about. In the days when the Angrez, (British), used to rule here, the Angrez word for labourer was "Coolie". And, when we first came from Gujarat, we used to work as labourers, and so the Angrez called us "Coolie". The name "Koli" has stuck, and that is how we are still

known. But we are really of the Rajput race.

ZAVO - The other Hindus here are all lower than us. They are low caste. They are the Bhangi, Meghvar, Bhil, and Parkari. [25/5/82]

Here we find the complete inverse of the explanation of the origins of the word "Coolie" generally accepted in North India. It is said that the Koli were the chief suppliers of labour for the various engineering projects of the British, and that the term "Coolie" is an anglicised corruption of their name (see also 1.2).

It can be seen from some of these comments that ideas about food and commensality are clearly associated with status and hierarchy. Let us hear what Zavo had to say about other tribes and castes in general.

ZAVO PAJI - Koli are part of the Rajput race. We are Kachi Rajput, one and the same.

Brahman are high caste. They eat our food, and we eat theirs. So are Vaniya. We are all equal. We also eat with the Vadiyara Koli,... as they do not eat Big Meat (cow or buffalo meat).

Sindi are below us. They eat Big Meat. They think that they are above us, but the only reason for this is the fact that this is now their country. Before, it was always Hindu-Muslim, and not Muslim-Hindu. We do not eat the food of Sindi.

Parkari Koli and Bhil, they eat with Sindi. They are below us and they eat our food, but from separate dishes. Bhangi are lowest of all. Bajaniya are lower than Parkari or Bhil. They do labouring and keep orchards. Bhagri are very low. They eat jackals, cats, and animal dung. [15/4/81]

Babu, Zavo's son, had grander notions of the Kori status than his father.

BABU PAJI - The Vadiyara Koli are below us. They may not eat Big Meat, but even so they are below us. The Brahman do not eat Big Meat, but they are below us also. The Bhil and Parkari Koli are low caste too. But the Sindi are below them. [16/4/81]

Rano had opinions along the lines of Zavo's.

RANO AKHIYANI - Bhil are below us. They, Parkari Koli, and Meghvar, they eat animals which have died. We do not eat their food. If they eat ours we give it to them on separate plates. If they use our plates we throw them away afterwards. If any of us eat with them, then we separate those people from our tribe.

We eat with the Vadiyara Koli as they do not eat carrion, nor do they eat Big Meat. But the Sindi eat cows, buffaloes, and oxen. They eat the very animals that give them milk!

JNY - Do the Vaniya eat with the Kori?

RANO - Of course they eat with us. Are we not all Hindus? The Brahman eat with us also. But none of us eat with the lower castes.

JNY - What would actually happen if you ate with them?

RANO - Nothing would happen. But how could we? Would you wish to eat with someone who ate the meat of animals which have died? [14/4/81]

So far we have seen that, while statements are contradictory and claims depend upon whom is making them, the accepted basis for classification has been the eating of Big Meat, and the eating of the meat of animals which have died by accident, illness, or old age. Here, again, Dadi Zati once did some useful summing up.

DADI ZATI - Meghvar, Parkari, Sindi, Bhil are all low caste. We keep the dishes they use separate, on top of our house wall. The lowest are the Meghvar. They eat carrion.

MAMA SAHADEVA - (disgustedly) They all eat carrion. I have seen animals killed by vehicles on the road and Bhil or Parkari Koli have come to take them away.

A calf of ours once died, and so I called to the Parkari Koli who lived nearby to come and take it away. They pretended to be insulted. "Why? Do you think we would eat it?" they asked. And so we left it outside the village, but in the morning it was gone, and the footprints were those of the Parkari. They had come in the night, taken it, and quickly cut it up and distributed it.

Once we used to bury the animals that died. Then the Parkari and Bhil could not get at them.

DADI ZATI - If an animal is killed by having its throat slit, then we can eat it. But if it dies not by the act of our hands, then we cannot. But they do! [6/8/81]

Categories other than eating habits are also used to classify people.

NANI - The Mevasi Koli are low caste. We do not eat their food. Their womens' garments do not cover their stomachs, only their breasts, and their stomach, back, and arms they leave naked. We may have our backs naked, but we pull our shawls round to cover them. They do not. They strut about half naked. They are dirty people.

The Vadiyara Koli are high caste. We eat their food and they eat ours. They are a good people. When we go to their

weddings they give us their own dishes, clean and washed. When we have finished eating they wash our dishes themselves. Their customs are good.

The Tharadri Koli are low caste. Their customs are low. They are like the Parkari, who eat animals which have died. It is the same with the Bhil. The Parkari say that they have stopped eating Big Meat, yet they feed Big Meat to their guests at weddings.

The Meghvar are even lower than the Bhil. They will eat Bhil food, but the Bhil will not eat theirs. Why? Because they take the skin off dead animals and eat their meat! If one of our women has had her shoes repaired by a Meghvar, then she gets some one to sprinkle water over her so she can go home. That is how low the Meghvar are.

We do not eat the food of Sindi because we worship the mata. If we were to eat their food then our mata would grab us by the throat. They would cause illness in our family. [9/3/82]

To mere eating habits as a differentiating characteristic, Nani has added clothing, good customs, the power of the mata and occupation. By and large, however, occupation is the most often mentioned characteristic other than eating habits. One evening at Ramshi's house, the conversation centred on the incredible fact that the Christian Padri (generally considered to be an endogamous group in their own right) actually visited the homes of Meghvar.

RAMSHI VARESA - We hear about the Christian Padri. They say that everyone is the same in the eyes of God. When Meghwar become Christians - Meghvar! Those who work with the skin of dead cows, buffaloes, oxen - when they become Christians then the Padri go and stay with them, drink their tea, and eat their food - off their plates!

All right, but look at the Bhangji! They work with faeces! You know what faeces are, don't you? Well, such is their work. And still the Padri say that if they are Christians they will eat with them!

ZOMI - If I were to eat from the plate of a Meghwar, my tongue would shrivel! [24/10/81]

To sum up briefly, the Kori tend to rank themselves with the high caste Vanija and the Brahman, and with the Vadijara Koli, all of whom have high standards of purity in their diet. The Sindi are low caste because they eat Big Meat. So do the Bhil and the Parkari. These latter are also suspected of eating animals which have died, and they have no doubt that the Meghwars do this also. But the Meghwar and the Bhangji have, on top of their eating habits, the undeniable condemnation of their occupation -

as leather workers and sweepers - which places them well at the foot of society.

What Parry finds for the Hindus in Kangra, however, also holds for those of Sind. Very few caste members actually perform their hereditary occupation. In Kangra most Hindus are either cultivators, or else work outside the region (Parry,1979:59/60), and, while occupation in the caste hierarchy is ideally heterogeneous, in practice it is more homogeneous.

## II. Caste and Diet

We shall concentrate on the criteria of diet as a means of classification, for as can be seen, it is used with reference to social groupings who have the same occupation as the Kori themselves: the Sindi, the Bhil, and the Parkari Koli. Again, Parry's study in Kangra reveals similar distinctions. If a caste's occupation is relatively impure then its touch is polluting - as is the case, with the Kori, of the Meghvar - whereas if they have the same occupation then its food pollutes (ibid:111).

The only real slur that the Kori can pin on the Sindi, Bhil, and Parkari is the fact that, unlike the Kori, they indulge in the consumption of Big Meat - they eat the meat of buffaloes and cows. (In Kangra, Parry - 1979:90 - finds that no caste eats beef, although the stigma of having done so in the past still clings to leatherworkers.) Investigation of this differentiating characteristic, however, brings some interesting details to light about the past habits of the Kori themselves. They allow themselves to eat small meat, which includes fish, chicken and wild fowl, hares, sheep, deer, and goats. There they draw the line. I once broached this subject with Zavo, asking why Kori would not eat "bigger meat".

ZAVO PAJI - How can we eat the cow? It gives us milk. The Brahman say it would be the same as eating your mother. How could we milk them, and then kill and eat them?

I pointed out that he ate goat, despite the fact that he drank goat's milk. He was mildly confused and annoyed, and went off at a different angle.

ZAVO - Brahman eat goats, so do Vanija and the other high castes. [15/4/81]



Nilo Kotwar, although the village joker, gave me an unusually honest and thoughtful version of things as he saw them.

NILO KOTWAR - In the past we used to eat buffalo, but we have never eaten cow.

JNY - Why not?

NILO KOTWAR - We think of cows as mata, and we worship them and serve them - feeding them foods they like, and rubbing them down. How then could we kill and eat them?

JNY What about buffaloes?

NILO KOTWAR - No, we do not worship them. I cannot really say why we stopped eating them. We eat little meat, not big meat. [29/10/81]

Why, then, did the Kori stop eating big meat? I put this question to Dadi Zati.

DADI ZATI - My father would have tasted buffalo meat. his generation would have been the last which did so.

Arjan, who was listening, supplied the reason as far as he knew it.

ARJAN ADI'HRA - We all stopped eating buffalo because of the teachings of a big bhagat. A panchayat (council of elders) was held, and it was decided to forbid all the Kori to eat it. [26/10/81]

The story so far: The Kori are higher than the Sindi, Bhil, or Parkari because they do not eat buffalo meat whereas the latter do. Yet the Kori used to eat Big Meat and decided not to as a result of the teachings of a bhagat. (Doshi - 1971 - mentions a similar trend among the Bhils of Rajasthan.) Could it be said that their elevation as a social group is a reward of their religious fervour? The origins and development of the doctrines of Bhakti, are therefore of relevance to this study of caste hierarchy.

### III. Caste and Bhakti

JNY - Who was it who first taught the path of Bhakti in Sind?

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - It was Hans Nirvan. He came from India in the year 1932. It was he who united us all in the one path of Bhakti. Before then there were no Bhagat. Here and there were scattered people who practiced Bhakti, but they practiced

in isolation. Hans Nirvan brought us all together. Before he came we used to eat Big Meat as the Sindi do. But Hans Nirvan taught us that it is a sin to eat Big Meat. He taught us not to eat with Muslims and not to eat with Meghvar. He said do satsang and be bhagat, and he taught us the ways of Bhakti. [14/5/82]

Bapu gave his version of history once, when visiting the house of Lakshman Bhagat.

BAPU BHAGAT - In the beginning it was Sri Hans Sahib who taught us to do true and proper acts of Dharam. It was he who taught us not to eat with Sindi, and to separate ourselves from those who ate Big Meat.

LAKSHMAN BHAGAT - And it was a good thing he did, too. For had we not separated ourselves we would not have remained distinct. By now, no-one would have been able to tell us apart from Sindi. Our ways would have been one with theirs, and so would we not be one with them and with their moral state? [19/5/82]

It is plain, then, that the Kori concept of this moral state needs to be examined further if we are to ascertain its relevance to the way in which this break with the eating of Big Meat is conceptualised. For the Kachi Koli regard themselves as morally better than those who still do eat buffalo, just as the Kori bhagat regards himself as more righteous as a vegetarian than those who eat meat at all. Important here, and to the conceptualisation of caste hierarchy in general, are the concepts of pap, and abara.

We have already discussed pap in 3.1 and abara in 2.2. There are certain similarities between the two concepts. Both involve spiritual impurity. Both can be countered by acts of dharam. Both can also be shared or passed on. Eating meat one shares the pap of the killing, whereas the touch of the low, abara castes is polluting. The plates of the low castes are kept separate, just as those of the bhagat are kept separate if meat is being eaten. One might be tempted to suggest that pap and abara are equivalent in meaning, (i.e. that no distinction is made in meaning between moral and physical impurity), and that therefore, for example, the Bhangi (sweepers) are not only the most abara caste, but the most papi also. Investigations in this direction encountered consistent opposition however. I asked Hadhu if it were possible for a Bhangi to be reborn into high caste. He did not hesitate with his answer.

HADHU VEAN - That is a matter which depends upon his "earnings". It is a matter of the condition of his ziv. It

matters not whether he is a Bhangi or of a high caste; when Ishwar examines his ziv then, depending upon his earnings, he will be reborn into a high or low caste.

JNY - If rebirth is purely a matter of pap and dharam, why do you not eat with Bhangi?

HADHU - Bhangi are the lowest of castes. We cannot eat with them. We cannot sit on the same bed as them. If I were sitting on a bed, a Bhangi would have to sit on the ground. He would be too ashamed to sit beside me. [5/3/82]

Similarly, I asked of Zavo whose pap was the greater: that of the Sindi who eats beef, or that of the Meghvar who eats carrion.

ZAVO PAJI - The pap of the Sindi is greater. The Meghvar do not do pap by eating carrion. But, nevertheless, by doing so they are dirty. [25/5/82]

I went to great lengths to explain my reasoning to Jari and to Ramzi, her daughter's husband.

JNY - You do not eat with Sindi because they eat Big Meat. And you do not eat with Meghvar because they eat carrion which is abara. When the Sindi eat Big Meat this is a pap. Does this mean that those who eat carrion are also papi?

JARI - No! No! Those who eat carrion do not commit pap. You see, Meghvar skin dead cows and buffaloes for their leather, and then they take for themselves the best meat to eat. This is meat that has been dead for two, or even three days! How could we let such people near us? How could we think of eating with them? But, if they eat animals which have died of their own accord, that is not their pap. For the death of the animal has been ordered by Ishvar. But it is not nice to eat the meat of that which has not had its throat cut by the hand of man.

RAMZI MAHALEYO - But the eating of meat which has been killed by your own hand is pap. Animals, you see, have ziv just as we do. Now, if someone were to cut your throat you would suffer, would you not? Similarly, when you cut the throat of an animal it will suffer, and you will have done pap by causing that suffering. But all those who share in the eating of the animal that has been killed also share in the pap of its killing, be it by a large or a small amount. [8/5/82]

#### IV. Pap and Abara

Here it is time for another short summary. The Kori consider themselves to be high caste. Some castes they consider lower on the basis of their occupation which involves abara. Those which have the same

occupation as themselves are considered lower because of what they eat. This itself may be abaral, or it may be papi, the former term applying to the meat of animals which have died of their own accord of old age, illness, or accident, the latter applying to Big Meat, to cows or buffaloes which have been butchered for their meat.

It is with this latter area of definition that the Kori have problems. It is taken for granted that if a caste's occupation involves abaral, or if their diet involves abaral, then they are a low caste and, by nature, abaral themselves. Such presumptions stand unquestioned (as facts), and the status of castes which are so distinguished is seldom mentioned.

When, in the conversation detailed above, Ramshi described the Padri' contact with the Meghvar and the Bhangji, he was appealing to fundamental premises which he fully expected me to share. Earlier (3.1) Satruga Bhagat spoke of the calling of the Bhangji - to remove excrement - and contrasted it with that of the Kori - to farm. This draws to our attention another feature of caste ideology whereby it is assumed that different castes are inherently different in nature. This has been commented upon by other ethnographers in North India (Parry, 1979:55; Pocock, 1973:58; Inden & Nicholas, 1977:xiv).

Whereas the Kori have no difficulty conceptualising the Meghvar and Bhangji as having different natures to their own because of the formers' occupations, they have more problems with other castes who, like themselves, are cultivators. When the topic of caste occurs at all in conversation it centres on the fact that such-and-such a caste eat Big Meat and therefore are low caste because of their pap. And yet, where definitions of the word "abaral" are consistent, and considered to be obvious, definitions of the word "pap" are varied and contradictory.

Application of the word "papi" (adjective) is also inconsistent. The distinction between eating Big Meat and Little Meat is constantly emphasised. Lower castes are papi because they eat Big Meat whereas the Kori only eat Little Meat. Yet the Kori bhagat do not eat meat at all, and their presence is a constant reminder that in terms of pap the Kori layman is nearer to the lower caste than to the Bhagat. Yet vegetarian food is happily shared with the Bhagat but not with the low caste.

Viewed in a historical context, it is possible to suggest an explanation for the beliefs associated with the word "pap". The definition of Satruga Bhagat, that to cause suffering is to do pap, (3.1) is generally accepted. And in partnership with acts which ease suffering, acts of dharam, pap is seen in the context of rebirth (i.e. concern for the future). More recently, however, the suffering caused by taking life has become the focal, and popular meaning of the word "pap", and distinction has been drawn between the pap of killing big animals, buffaloes and cows, and of killing little animals, goats, chickens, etc.. The reasoning behind this distinction is uncertain and contradictory, but with the aid of this distinction the Kori have been able to separate themselves from, and elevate themselves above, other formerly equivalent Hindu castes, and above the Sindi.

Where pap was previously to do with rebirth, it now is seen as relevant in the context of the present life also, and thus comes close in meaning to the word "abaral". Yet, while it is obvious to every Kori that to sweep the sewers, and to skin dead animals and eat their meat one must be, by nature, abaral, it is not obvious that there is an enormous difference between eating buffalo meat and eating goat meat. But this difference is vital to the Kori position in their caste hierarchy and so must be continually re-emphasised.

Sindi, Bhil, and Parkari are low caste. They eat Big Meat. They eat the meat of the very animal which gives them milk. It would be like us eating our very mothers.

This argument is constantly re-affirmed. Old ladies mumble it to each other in the evenings. Men state it majestically in conversation in the fields. Children repeat it parrot fashion, imitating the tones of their elders. Should the topic of caste arise at any time, its statement by someone is a distinct possibility. Yet Kori quite happily eat goat meat as well as drinking its milk.

Let us return to Dumont's theory that the language of hierarchy is expressed as the pure/impure opposition, for the concept of impurity is the one which best ensures the separation of the castes. Impurity to the Kori is abaral; but the concept of pap is also used to separate the castes. Even so, pap only succeeds in separating the Kori from the Sindi, Parkari, and Bhil by being given the characteristics of abaral. Pap is forced into the abaral mould so as to justify hierarchy, and this results



in inconsistency in its use.

McGilvray, when discussing his ethnography of the Mukkavar of Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, describes remarkably similar conceptual dilemmas (McGilvray 1982b). The Mukkavar are a caste vying for status superiority with an equally mobile and economically powerful Vellalar caste. In his discussion of the manner in which they categorise the Vellalar, McGilvray criticises the theories of both Dumont (1970a) and Marriott & Inden (1977) for being inadequate. He finds that the latter's notion of shared bodily substance (i.e. blood) is not used at all to define the nature of a caste member (McGilvray 1982b:54), and that indigenous applications of the former's pure/impure dichotomy are inconsistent, often overlapping into areas of moral and spiritual defect (ibid:55).

The circumstance of the Kori is similar in some ways to the Mukkavar. They exercise a degree of mobility within the hierarchy of Sind, while at the same time competing for status with other Hindu cultivating castes, and with the Sindi - although the latter have no economic or political need to acknowledge their views on the matter. Whilst the Kori have no difficulty in conceptualising the Meghvar and Bhangi castes as being different in nature from themselves, they have problems doing so with the Parkari, Bhil, and Sindi. Whilst they have no difficulty classifying the former castes as impure, they have a problem with the latter, and have had to borrow the moral concept of "pap" to solve it.

Yet our ethnography indicates that, contrary to the Mukkavar, the Kori do use the concept of shared bodily substance (nature) and impurity (abaral) to conceptualise a caste hierarchy, and that the nature of a caste is, to them, closely linked with its relative purity. Nevertheless, abaral does not cover all possible situations where status has to be rationalised, and in such situations pap has to be substituted.

This conceptual juggling highlights a major difference of opinion between Das and Dumont over which concept, impurity or sin, is the more fundamental to Hindu society.

those who have been led to believe that the notion of impurity encompasses the notion of sin have perhaps confused the idiom with the content (Das 1982:130/1).

Our ethnography to some degree supports Dumont's argument that "the

religion of caste [pure/impure] is fundamental" (1958:34), in the sense that, in the context of social status, the Kori take pap from its moral plane and subordinate it, in its usage, to abaral. Nevertheless, it is important to realise that caste status, to the Kori, is a concern of the present and of the group, whereas in the context of individual concern for the future it is pap, not impurity, which is fundamental.

## V. Summary

In conclusion, how has the Kori perception of caste status in Sind been influenced by the two major forces which we have identified which motivate change: growing affluence and Sindi dominance? The former seems to have had the greater effect on intra-caste relations. Within the caste the growing independence of individual Kori has lent itself to the growth of Bhakti, with its appeal to the individual and its promise of power over their future state. Outwith the Kori caste, Sindi dominance has had the greater impact on relations. Whereas wealth might give the individual greater power within the caste, in the outer world the individual Kori have their caste's subordinate position in relation to the Sindi to consider, and in this context the individual is weakest.

Caste ideology, with its immediate appeal to the group, is thus a major foundation of the Kori perceptions of the world of which they are a part. It is ironic to us that, whilst Bhakti and Caste are ideologically opposed, adherence to Bhakti enables the Kori to improve their status as a caste. For, as well as providing doctrines respectably paralleling those of Islam, Bhakti lends Caste the concept of the pap of eating Big Meat to substitute for abaral and use as an ideological means of setting the Kori against and above their neighbours. And, despite the inconsistency in its use, there is every possibility that, within a few generations if the situation is not radically altered, the moral (physical) impurity of the Big Meat eater will no longer be an often voiced justification for higher caste status, but will have become an accepted fact.

Our study has isolated two opposing areas of Kori "belief" and related practices which, because of the different contexts of their use, complement each other within the overall Kori conceptual sphere. There are the traditional (local, "village", "tribal", "little") beliefs, typified among the Kori themselves by Devipuza. These beliefs are generally the concern of the group and are relevant to their present situation. In contrast there are the modern (literate, "greater") beliefs, typified by Bhakti. These are generally the concern of individuals, and are of relevance to their future (after-death) situation.

Our study has also isolated two major forces which are seen to motivate the changes taking place in the Koris' conceptual schemes. These are their increasing affluence and their position in a society lacking high caste Hindus but dominated by Muslims. While the former was seen to favour the growth of Bhakti internal to the Kori caste as a whole, the latter was found to have the overriding influence, for the doctrines adhered to by the Kori were seen to effect their standing in society. The Kori concern for status as a caste thus constrained, and indeed subordinated, Bhakti to an ideology of caste hierarchy.

#### I. - Devipuza

Against this background we must, firstly, consider the future of the Koris' "traditional" beliefs and practices. In general, the status of beliefs and rituals which reinforce group solidarity is slowly being eroded by increasing Kori affluence. The diminishing size of the gatherings at the three major annual festivals has been mentioned. The "counting of hands" at funerals is being replaced by the host bearing the expense. This has yet to happen at the wedding, and indeed the wedding seems to have suffered the least change of all the communal rituals. One reason for this may be its role in the life cycle of the individual as well as that of the group.

Affluence, and the increasing availability of "western" medicines is also favouring the doctor at the expense of the bhopa when it comes to accidents and illness. The doctors do not appear to challenge the power

of the bhopa in all their spheres of activity, however. While doctors are adequate in meeting individual needs by curing common illnesses, their medicines are ineffective against jadhu and possession, which often manifest themselves in mental disability or in long term illnesses such as tuberculosis.

The bhopa, as the priest of the zach mata also remains a key figure in meeting the needs of the zach, membership of which is automatic by birth. The zach has none of the exclusivity of the Bhakti sect, and makes few comparable demands on one's individual lifestyle.

While increasing affluence seems to have eroded the status of "traditional" beliefs and practices to the advantage of the "modern" beliefs which are set against them, the former are certainly not being replaced by the latter in the contexts in which they remain most effective.

We have already discussed the direct influence the Sindi have on the Kori (7.1,III.), but conflict between the "traditional" and Bhakti also brings about change. We saw how goat sacrifices had conveniently replaced the buffalo sacrifices practised in India (5.4). Sacrifice itself is opposed to the non-violent ideals of Bhakti, however, and in the institution of the vegetarian mata (5.4) we find direct conflict between Bhakti and Devipuza mediated.

The Moriya Pat, central to which is the worship of the zach mata to gain dharam for the ziv of the deceased, conflicted with Bhakti, which claimed to be the true path to dharam, and had to be replaced by the Gita Pat. The wedding, in contrast, had no relevance for the individual's dharam, and no direct involvement of the zach mata. It therefore remained outwith Bhakti's concern.

## II. - Bhakti

Secondly, we must consider what the future holds in store for Bhakti. Unless a better substitute emerges, it is likely that the growing affluence of the Kori will continue to favour Bhakti. However, while Bhakti, for the reasons discussed above (7.2,V.) currently adds to the Koris' status as a

caste, there is little doubt that, if it were to become a threat to the latter, its popularity would be rapidly undermined.

In a sense, the bhagat are faced with a choice: either to strive towards the egalitarianism which is directly opposed to caste ideals, or to become functioning substitutes for the Brahman who no longer inhabit Sind. In striving for egalitarianism, Bhakti has always had a mixed response from Hindus in general. Stein's study of social mobility in medieval South Indian sects, for example, illustrates the conflicting principles at large.

The central characteristic of the Bhakti movement, in textual terms, is its openness, its universal appeal without regard to caste (Stein 1968:80).

He contrasts this with

the restrictive structure of Hindu society that is expressed in the legal and social texts of the age (ibid).

Stein traces the fortunes of a Sudra caste who enthusiastically adhered to Bhakti's doctrines and practices. Whilst they met with initial success, in terms of their status, gaining access to respectable temple positions with economic benefits, in the long term their gains were nullified. The need to avoid schism lead eventually to the re-affirmation of caste values in that particular Bhakti movement. The egalitarianism, which had appealed at a time when Hinduism in general had been under threat from aggressive Muslim domination, was undermined with the re-establishment of Hindu military power which sought support in orthodoxy.

Whilst Pocock finds that Bhakti sect membership is replacing caste solidarity in Gujarat, the sect is not seen to oppose caste, but rather to reduce its importance (Pocock 1973:153).

The most common manifestation of Bhakti in the village [Gujarat] is found in the bhajan mandali, hymn-singing groups. In theory, as the doctrine of Bhakti suggests, there are no caste distinctions to the membership of these groups and, indeed, none are exclusive in theory. In fact those untouchables in the village who have not succumbed to the Christian mission have their own group (Pocock 1973:102).

Pocock also finds an irony in the changes taking place, for the sect is becoming also the sole repository of caste values (ibid:95).

Whilst Bhakti's individualism is popular within the Kori caste, any pressure from bhagat towards equality with the bhagat of other Hindu



castes would meet strong resistance. (Attempts by the Church of Pakistan to break down caste barriers between Christians from the Hindu castes have had little success.) There are no higher caste Hindus for the Kori to strive for equality with, and equality with the castes they consider to be lower than themselves would necessitate an immediate loss of status. Equality with the Sindi is out of the question, for the Sindi do not consider the Kori to be their equals anyway.

A second option open to bhagat is to assume the high status role of the ritual specialist which may have been occupied in the past by Brahman or priests. It is unknown to us how much Brahman involvement there was in the past. The phera songs mention the Brahman and, indeed, a Brahman who was available was enlisted to preside over the fire at Babu Paji's viva (6.2,IX.). Mama Sahadeva also referred to psuedo-Brahman astrologers (6.2,II.).

Although the role of a priest in past funerals is unknown, it is here that the bhagat has made major inroads, now performing the Gita Pat in its entirety. We saw that, while bhagat were involved in the astrological calculations of wedding dates (6.2,II.), they were still not asked to preside over the phera fire. Instead the lada's banevi (ZH) was employed as a substitute for the Brahman.

Doshi (1971) states that this was also the case among the Bhil of Rajasthan. According to Pocock (1973:154), apart from the marriage rites, the Bhakti guru was involved by the Patidar of Gujarat in all essential household rituals in preference to Brahman. The bhagat of the Dhodia of South Gujarat, studied by Solanki (1976), appear to have taken over the priestly functions performed, among the Kori by the bhopa.

The inconclusive evidence from the Kori case is thus echoed in other ethnographies. While the bhagat might show passing interest in other Kori rites, their chief involvement is with the funeral where Bhakti comes into its own. We cannot, therefore, argue that the bhagat are replacing Brahman in all their ritual roles, yet, in terms of individual well-being, they are involved in the most important ritual sequence as far as Bhakti is concerned.

In conclusion, we can see that, whereas growing affluence favours "modern" as opposed to "traditional" beliefs in the context of the

individual, there remain areas of "traditional" belief which it does not effect and where the power of the zach and of the zach mata are unchallenged. Sindi dominance also favours Bhakti among the Kori. At the same time, however, it reinforces their ideology of caste.

Concern for caste status remains the more influential force upon the Koris' perception. For, while individuals might improve their situation through economic gain, only if the status of the caste as a whole improves can they improve their position within the wider society.

Our discussion so far supports Dumont's argument that the ideology of caste, which justifies group status, underlies all Hindu "belief"(1970a). Yet, as we have seen, the Kori are a small powerless minority in a Muslim dominated society, and this has had no small influence on their adherence to caste principles. Their state compared to that of the majority of Hindus in the sub-continent is therefore exceptional. Our concluding section will consider this more thoroughly.

#### SECTION 7.4: THE REALITIES OF KORI LIFE

We began this study by discussing the manner in which the Kori themselves might perceive different aspects of reality, arguing that they ranged their perceptions along a continuum from individual opinion through belief to fact, according to the number and perceived validity of alternative perceptions which they recognise to exist in their social world. In this chapter we have isolated two major forces which are in the process of influencing their perceptions of reality. These are, firstly, growing affluence, which has increased the power of the individual Kori over their circumstance. Secondly, there is the manner in which other groups in Sind, most notably the dominant Sindi Muslims, perceive the Kori. Their low status in the eyes of the Sindi has contributed to their powerlessness as a group.

## I. Power and Status

It is important to distinguish between how other groups perceive the Kori and the status which they ascribe to themselves according to an ideology of caste hierarchy. This raises the distinction between power and status which has been the subject of much debate in recent years.

Dumont, when discussing the relationship between the Brahman, representing the spiritual power of the priest, and the Kshatriya, representing the military power of the ruler (dominant caste), argues that the former encompasses the latter within its ideological framework, thus providing society with a unity of values (1970b:68-78). Military power is thus justified in terms of relative purity.

The question which this leaves to be asked is how this status/power relationship copes in societies without Brahman. Moffatt's study of a colony of "Untouchables" in Tamil Nadu reveals that, despite resentment of their social position and rejection of Brahmanic Hinduism, they still adhere to caste values.

hierarchy, or a pervasive ranking principle, is as much a part of the effective values of the lowest castes ... as it is for the middle range and high castes. And this hierarchical or ranking principle is defined as consistently in terms of purity and pollution at the bottom of the caste system as it is at other levels (Moffatt 1975:120).

Reddy's study of a tribal village in Andhra Pradesh which is isolated from Hindu society in general, indicates the development of the rudiments of a caste system.

In the process of living together they have developed a unified social system with each group having an allotted place. A set of commensal restrictions have been evolved reflecting the status rankings of different groups (Reddy 1973:164).

In contrast to these studies, however, McGilvray argues that in Batticaloa where there are also no Brahmans, relative purity is not used as a category for delimiting status. Instead he finds that a political/legal idiom is adopted by both the Mukkavar and the Vellalar to claim both political and "religious" superiority over each other (McGilvray 1982:88). While status is important, caste ideology does not provide the means through which it can be rationalised.

These three cases have been situations where power has existed alongside status. But what of the situation where groups do not acknowledge the "religious" ideology of their political superiors, for in such situations the ideology cannot encompass the power relationship? The Hindus and Muslims of Kangra are found by Parry (1979:102) to make no effort to join their rankings into the one hierarchy. In Nepal Gaborieau (1972:103) discusses the contradiction created by the presence of Muslims and the need for the Hindus to assign them a rank. In both these cases, however, caste ideology, manifested in terms of purity and impurity, is adhered to by the dominant Hindus. Dissent on ideological grounds from lowly Muslims does not, therefore, undermine the caste hierarchy itself.

In Kashmir Madan examines the situation of the high status Hindu Pandits in their Muslim environment and uncovers dual conceptual systems (Madan 1972:137 - see also 1.2,II.). Kashmiri society is hierarchically ranked, but while the Hindus rationalise this hierarchy in terms of a caste ideology, the Muslims use a looser framework of occupation groups (ibid:128).

The Hindus of Sind, in contrast to those of Kashmir, have little status and little power in society in general. They are looked down upon by the Sindi because of their relative political and economic poverty, and because they are Hindus. The Kori, however, while they acknowledge that in terms of power they are the Sindi's inferior, claim superiority in the terms of a caste ideology which the Sindi reject. Thus we have a situation where, in Dumont's terms, the ideology of caste does not encompass power, for the powerful group does not acknowledge it.

Dumont discusses a similar dilemma within the Hindu context, where the non-vegetarian Kshatriya is ranked above the vegetarian Vaishya.

Hierarchy cannot give place to power as such, without contradicting its own principle. Therefore it must give a place to power without saying so, and it is obliged to close its eyes to this on pain of destroying itself (Dumont 1970a:117).

Dumont goes on to argue that the theory of the Varna enables caste ideology to avoid this inherent conflict (ibid:118). For the kori the solution is much simpler. Sindi society does not have such ideological unity, and cannot have recourse to the Varna, but the Kori do, as we have seen (7.2), explain the political dominance of the Sindi as a historical

aberration which has replaced the true order of society wherein the Koris' power was equal to their caste status. It is ironic, therefore, that the high caste status which the Kori lay claim to, has been achieved because of this recent history, when the Sindi replaced the high caste Hindus of old.

## II. Power and Reality

While the Kori see themselves as superior to the Sindi in terms of an ideology of caste (pure/impure), we have seen that their power relationship with the Sindi has still affected their perceptions of reality. While finding an ideological rationale for their caste superiority in the concept of pap, many of their "beliefs" and practices have been modified to exclude elements which overtly decrease their status in Sindi eyes. Thus the real hierarchy, based on power, contradicts the Koris' ideal hierarchy, based on caste principles, for it is the Koris' perceptions which are influenced by those of the Sindi, not the other way round.

The ethnographer, standing outside the "context" (Horton, MacIntyre), or "habitus" (Bourdieu), in which the Kori perceive reality, is able, by referring to their socio-historical context, to distinguish between what to them is a fact and what, while seen by them as a "fact" or "belief", is more likely to be a justification. Our study of Kori perception has revealed several such collectively held justifications. Bodies, for example, are buried because the Sindi look down upon cremation, but this is weakly justified on terms of the inconvenience and expense involved in the latter. The pap of eating Big Meat is borrowed from the teaching of Bhakti and used to justify the Koris' higher caste status in relation to the Sindi, and other Hindu groups who would otherwise be indistinguishable in terms of relative purity. Pap is thus used in a social context which creates ambiguity for its moral meaning.

Where political expediency merits such ideological justification, confusion often results from it. Ideology, strained apart by the pressures of the world, has to be continually patched up again. What may initially be a collective justification is perceived of as a fact, and it becomes in time indistinguishable from the other facts, beliefs, and opinions which clutter the Kori perception of the world they inhabit. The caste values with



which Hindus justify their status in society are constantly changing to the advantage of various groups. This need not necessarily be the overt intention of the groups concerned, however, for, as Pocock has said of the Hindus of Gujarat, while they do not aspire to a higher status than their own, for this would undermine their current position, their ideas of their own way of life "imperceptibly change" (Pocock,1973:59). The status of the Kori may be the result of an endless jockeying for position with other groups on a framework of alternative strategies in a world of caste ideology, but they do not necessarily perceive or acknowledge it as such.

## GLOSSARY

- abaral - impurity  
Akhatri - harvest festival  
alef be - A B (Arabic)  
Allah - God (Arabic)  
Amarpur - "Heaven"  
anna - 1/16 rupee  
Arjan - a hero of the Mahabharata  
Arthi - Hymn sung during the offering of bhao  
Atham - day after Hachmo  
athma - spirit (ziv)  
avtari - incarnation  
Bajaniya - musician caste  
banevi - sister's husband  
banez - sister/daughter's son/daughter  
bapa - father (daddy)  
bardi - delicacy made from the animal's first milk  
barfi - milk based sweetmeat  
Batai - Shah Abdul Latif, Muslim poet and saint  
bathrizo - brother's son  
Bessarazi - local god  
bezo - brain  
bhabhi - elder brother's wife (term of respectful affection)  
bhag - fortune, orchard  
bhagat/Bhagatani - Bhakti devotee  
Bhagvan - Krishna, Ishvar, The Supreme Deity  
Bhakti - doctrine of salvation through love/devotion  
Bhangji - sweeper caste  
bhao - sweets offering  
Bhao - Religious feast  
bhava - temple priest  
Bhil - cultivating caste  
bhopa/Bhopi - mata priest/medium  
bhut - ghost  
bidi - indigenous cigarette  
Brahman - priestly (highest) caste  
bunda - evil, curse, five fingers outstretched

chilum - upright clay pipe  
crore - 10,000,000  
dada - father's father  
da'it - invitation to viva/kharas  
Dan Teris - two days before Divali  
dan - offering  
der - husband's younger brother  
dev/devi - god/goddess  
Devipuza - the worship of (local) gods  
dharam - spiritual merit  
dhut - Ishvar's messenger  
Divali - Festival of Light  
divo/diva - lamp  
dukh - suffering, pain, hardship  
dund - shaking to indicate possession  
dup - burned offering  
dzinn - demon (Arabic)  
Eid - Muslim festival at the end of the month of fasting (Ramzan)  
Fakir - ascetic/beggar caste  
Ganesh - elephant-headed son of Shiva  
garabi - clay lamp in pot sung round the village at No Northa  
geny - eclipse of the sun  
gharib - humble, meek  
ghi - clarified butter  
Gita - section of the Mahabharat central to Bhakti  
Gita Pat - Funeral rites based on the reading of the Gita  
gothiro - pot lifted by junior male before the wedding rites proceed  
guru - (spiritual) teacher  
habkan - concluding rite of engagement  
Hachmo - Festival of the Smallpox Goddess  
hahara - husband/wife's father/elder male relation, affines  
hahu - husband/wife's mother/elder female relation  
hak - branch  
halva - wheat based sweet  
ham - form of oath  
hand - female camel  
Hans Nirvani - founder of the Hans Nirvani sect  
Hanuman - Monkey God  
hara - wife's brother  
harcha - rabid

Hari Om! - Proclamation of oneness with Ishvar  
hath-gin - counting of hands  
havan - offering burnt in Bhakti  
hawa rupiya - one and a quarter rupees  
hiyo - heart  
Holi - Festival of the Fire Goddess  
Holi Mata - Fire Goddess  
Honaro - goldsmith  
Hutani - see Holi  
ilim - knowledge  
ilimwara - master of knowledge  
Ishvar - the supreme deity  
jadhu - spells  
Je! - Victory!  
jelebi - deep fried sweetmeat  
jivan (Panjabi) - life  
jug - age  
Kabir Panth - Bhakti sect  
kaka - father's younger brother  
Kaliyan - a Hindu scripture  
Kanzi - see Krishna  
kar - rage  
kara - bhopa's armlet  
Kara Soudis - Black Fourteenth (day before Divali)  
Kari'ori - local goddess  
Kariya - Iron smith  
Karkiya - local goddess  
karni barni -  
kasam (Sindhi) - see ham  
kashiya - cymbals  
kaskala - initial engagement ceremony  
khan - offering piled to the goddess  
Kharas - funeral expense  
Khetarpar - local goddess  
Khoriyar - local goddess  
kiri - prohibition/rule  
kotwar - bhagat's aide  
Krishna - incarnation of Vishnu  
kular - offering to Sitla Mata  
kushi - happiness

lada/ladi - bridegroom/bride  
ladua - strength-giving delicacy served to nursing mother  
lagan - paper, listing wedding dates and timings  
Lakshman - brother of Rama  
lepzi - offering of wheat and raw sugar  
Ling - phallus, symbol of Shiva  
lolra - delicacy offered to ganesh  
lota - brass drinking vessel  
madh goddess shrine/temple  
magaz - mind  
Mahabharat - Hindu scripture containing the Gita  
Mahadev - Shiva  
Mali - agricultural caste  
mama - mother's brother  
mandua - wedding pavilion  
Manik Thamb - wedding pillar  
Marwari - from Marwar  
mashi - mother's sister  
mata - mother/goddess  
Meghvar - leatherworker caste  
mera - fair  
Momai - local goddess  
momai - healing herb found in Arabia  
moriva - lada's crown  
Moriva Pat - traditional funeral rite  
motba - father's elder brother  
mowali - pleasure addict  
mugti - release  
mullah - Muslim religious leader  
Munge - begging caste  
mut - evil spell  
Narag - "Hell"  
nash - snuff  
nasha - intoxicant  
nawab - ruler  
nazar - evil eye  
neyani - zach daughters  
No Northa - goddess festival  
Om - expression of one-ness with Ishvar  
pada - buffalo calf



pahli - palms of the hands  
paisa - one hundredth of a rupee, "money"  
pakka - perfect  
Pandava - legendary Hindu Dynasty  
pandit - scholar  
panth - sect  
pap - "sin"  
Parbhu Isu - Lord Jesus  
Parkari - a Koli caste  
Paroti - Shiva's consort  
Parwa - New Years Day festival  
pat - scriptural passage, diagram  
pataha - sugar sweet  
patel - village headman  
Pathan - Muslim hillmen  
pati - leaf  
Pelaj - Ravan's brother  
pet - abdomen  
phera - circling of the wedding fire  
phu'i - father's sister  
phuo father's sister's husband  
Pir - Muslim holy man  
pirdi puzari - ancestor worship  
piti - mixture rubbed on lada/ladi's skin  
piyalawara - "one of the drinking bowl"  
prem - love  
puza - worship  
Rajput - warrior caste  
Ram! Ram! (Ram e Ram!) - Hindu greeting  
Rama - hero of the Ramayana  
Ramayana - Hindu epic of Rama and Sita  
Rama Pir - local Hindu saint  
Ravan - villain of the Ramayana  
ravar - low, "bhopa" caste  
Raz Bai - a goddess  
raza - ruler  
rotlo - flour pancakes, "bread"  
saaz - stringed instrument  
sab - ladi's clothes and jewelry donated by lada's family  
sabath - guru's teaching

sadhu - ascetic  
samaran - evening  
Sanatan Dharam - Hindu Dharam  
sathi - sixth day naming ceremony for son  
satiya - saints  
Savan - local goddess  
selo - disciple  
ser - approx. 1 Kilogram  
sera - wedding cord  
Sevyid Muslim, descendant of the Prophet  
shalok - couplet  
shanti - peace  
Shikothar - local goddess  
shiro - fried wheat pudding  
Shiva (Sheva) - "The Destroyer" - third aspect of the Hindu Trinity  
Sindi - Sindi Muslim  
Sita - wife of Rama  
Sitla Mata - The Smallpox Goddess  
son - traditional formula  
soti - hairlock offered to mata  
sufi - Muslim ascetic  
sukh - pleasure  
sunari - tie-dyed shawl  
Surel - local goddess  
sureli - ghost of a woman who has died in childbirth  
Surg - "Heaven"  
tan - stretch  
tanpura - stringed rhythm instrument  
thamb - pillar  
tilak - caste mark  
tili - see tilak  
tipani - almanac  
torani - entrance  
tota - boiled grain  
uthak - verandah  
Vadiyara - a Koli caste  
Vah! Vah! - exclamation of approval  
Vaniya (Baniya) - merchant caste  
vanora - meal served to lada/ladi  
varthi - ballad

vas - sacred smoke from bhao offering

vau - wife

Vethani Nandi - river crossed after death

vevai - marriageable relation

vidi - prohibition

vih - twenty

Vishnu - "The Preserver" - second aspect of the Hindu Trinity

Visvamanthar - hero sent by Vishnu to test men

viva - marriage

wayk - invitation to Bhao

yogi - ascetic

zach - patrilineage

zamai - daughter's husband

zan - lada's party

zanotoro - celebration at lada's village

zar - offering to goddess

zethani - husband's elder brother's wife

ziv - life-force, "soul"

## APPENDIX I: CLASSIFICATIONS OF FOOD AND DRINK

Three separate groups were asked to classify a list of foods. These consisted of, firstly, Hadhu Vear on his own (H), secondly, Lakshman Bhagat and Jari together (L), and thirdly, Dadi Zatu, Nani, Mama Sahadeva, and Arjan Adi'hra (Z). The results, with any comments made in addition, were as follows.

### FOOD ..... H - L - Z ..... COMMENTS

#### 1. Staples

Wheat rotlo ..... C - C - C .. NANI - The coldest.  
 Various wheat pud-  
 dings cooked with  
 sugar and ghi ..... C - C - C .. DADI ZATU - Strong.  
 Millet rotlo ..... H - H - H .. NANI - Very hot.  
 rice rotlo and  
 boiled rice, etc. ... C - C - C

#### 2. Lentils

Green lentils ..... C - H - H  
 Mung beans ..... C - C - C  
 Gram Beans ..... C - H - H .. M.SAHADEVA - Causes wind.  
 Yellow peas ..... H - H - H  
 Red lentils ..... C - H - H  
 Haricot beans ..... H - C - C

#### 3. Vegetables

Potatoes ..... H - H - H .. M.SAHADEVA - Causes wind.  
 Carrots ..... H - H - C  
 Sweet potatoes ..... H - H - C .. NANI - Cold of course; do they not  
 grow underground?  
 Peas ..... H - C - H  
 Aubergines ..... H - H - H .. L.BHAGAT - Causes rash.  
 Cauliflower ..... C - H - C  
 White radish..... C - H - C  
 Onions ..... C - H - C  
 Spinach ..... C - C - C .. JARI - Good for nursing mothers. NANI  
 - The  
 best thing for strength.  
 Green beans ..... H - H - H .  
 Round marrow ..... C - C - H .. M. SAHADEVA - These both have the  
 same effect: wind.  
 Tomatoes ..... C - C - C .. JARI - The coldest.  
 Artichokes ..... C - H - H

#### 4. Fruit

Mandarins ..... C - C - C  
 Apples ..... H - C - C  
 Pears ..... C - C - C  
 Plums ..... C - H - C  
 Fresh dates ..... H - H - H  
 Grapes ..... C - C - C .. NANI - The coldest.  
 Papaya ..... H - C - H .. L.ADI'HRA - Strong.  
 Pomegranate ..... C - C - C .. NANI - Good for a fever.  
 Banana ..... H - C - H .. NANI - Cause wind.

Melon ..... H - H - H .. M.SAHADEVA - Cause wind; L.BHAGAT & D.ZATI - Cause rash.

Water Melon ..... C - C - C .. JARI - Even so, if you eat a lot you get a rash.

Mango ..... H - H - H .. D.ZATI - Cause rash.

#### 5. Dried Fruit & Nuts

Peanuts ..... C - H - H .. HADHU - Too many will give you diarrhoea.

Walnuts, Almonds, Monkey nuts ..... H - C - H .. EVERYONE - Strong.

Dried dates, Raisins ..... H - H - H .. EVERYONE - Strong.

Coconut ..... H - C - H .. NANI - Strong. JARI - Do they not go into the sweets we make?

#### 6. Cooking Oils

Vegetable oil ..... C - H - H

Sesame seed oil ..... H - H - H .. D.ZATU - Strong.

#### 7. Herbs and Spices

Mustard ..... H - H - H

Chilli (green) ..... H - C - C .. L.ADI'HRA - Cold, although they burn the mouth.

Chilli (dry) ..... H - C - C

Black pepper ..... H - C - H .. NANI - The hottest.

Tumeric ..... C - H - C

Coriander ..... C - C

Cinnamon ..... H - H - H

Garlic ..... H - C - C/H

Cardamon ..... H - C - C

Aniseed ..... C - C

#### 8. Milk Products

Milk ..... H - H - H

Various milks were graded according to heat :

Buffalo ..... 1 - 2 - 1

Cow ..... 4 - 3 - 2

Sheep ..... 2 - 1 - 1

Goat ..... 3 - 4 - 2

M.SAHADEVA - Camel milk is the hottest.

Yoghurt ..... C - C - C

Buttermilk ..... C - C - C

Butter ..... C - H - C .. JARI - Butter is hot until it is purified by heat into ghi.

Ghi ..... H - C - H

Bardi (the sweet delicacy made from first milk) ..... H - . - H .. HADHU - Hotter than milk.

#### 9. Sugar

Refined sugar ..... C - C - C

Raw sugar ..... H - H - H

Wild honey ..... H - H .. D.RATU - Eat too much and you soon feel ill. JARI - Sweet but hot.

#### 10. Sweets

Kulfi & Barfi (milk base) ..... H - H - H .. L.ADI'HRA - They are made from milk.

Jebebi (deep fried gram flour & sugar) . C - H - C

Pataha (refined sugar base "bhao") .. C - C - C

#### 11. Intoxicants

Tea ..... H - H - H .. L.BHAGAT - Tea with refined sugar is cold.



Betel nut ..... H - H - C

For the following intoxicants, the opinions of Buro and Karam Mayani were included (B), for they were recognised experts in this field. Lakshman Bhagat was not questioned to avoid offending him.

SUBSTANCE ..... H - Z - B

Rum ..... H - H - H .. HADHU - The hottest.

Bhang ..... H - C - C

Tobacco ..... H - C

Snuff ..... H - H

Cannabis ..... H - H - C .. BURU - Very cold.

Opium ..... H - H

## APPENDIX II: WEDDING SONGS

The following songs are sung by the women in the evening after the lagan has been produced.

Go to the river quarter  
Bring back a true lagan  
The lagan is expensive  
Worth a hundred rupees  
But the loin-cloth of my brother Viram\*  
is of the highest quality

\* - name of lada substituted

The groom's party stopped at the astrologer's\*  
They wish the lagan to be written  
They will return bringing the lagan\*

\* - goldsmith, silversmith, etc. substituted in each verse. Also,  
\*\* - nose-ring, bracelet, etc.

In the days that follow leading up to the wedding, the pahli-filling rite is performed several times. The following are typical of the songs sung for the lada on these occasions.

Fill the pahli  
We have been filled of vanora (see below)  
At Shava's\* house  
Little wife, what food was there to feast on?

\* - name of host

Oh Kori, fill the brother's pahli  
Give up your rupees, oh brother's bridal party  
Where is the homeland of the lada's father?  
Let us take up the name of this town

In subsequent verses the last two lines are substituted with the following -

\* is the lada's dada (FF)  
\* is the mother's name

\* is the bathriza's (BS) kaka (FyB)  
\* is the kachi's (FyBW) name

\* is the brother's brother  
let us take his bhabhi's (eBW) name

\* is the pane's (ZS) mama (MB)

\* is the mami's (MBW) name

\* - relevant names inserted

The following is one of the songs sung for the ladi.

Send (name of MB) into the market  
Send (MB) for a camel,  
Dear Ganga, oh beads-of-a-draw-cord (endearment)  
Our in-law's house has many uthak\*  
You must now provide a uthak\* for them  
Dear Ganga, oh beads-of-a-draw-cord

\* - subsequent verses: tooth-sticks, food, a bathing pool

On the Morning of his viva, the lada and his retainers, head the procession of women to the entrance of his village, green shawl held aloft. The women sing as follows.

There are horses  
There are elephants  
A thousand horses in the lada's zan  
Where is this lada's homeland\*?  
What is the name of his town\*?

\*/\* - the following are substituted in turn: FF/M, FyB/FyBW, B/eBW, MB/MBW

We were told that, ideally, this song is sung as the lada mounts his horse before setting out for the village of his ladi.

On the zan's arrival at the ladi's village, the lada's procession forms up again, and the women sing the following as he is marched to his quarters for the night.

Awake! sleeping vevai  
The zan comes riding horses  
The horse needs sweet scents  
The oxen need cotton seeds (to eat)  
Those of the zan wish to feast  
Brother Babu wishes a ladi  
He will eat of the sugar  
Atop which rise bubbles of turmeric

On the night of his viva the lada and his aides remain with the women who have accompanied him. The women are in charge of the rituals. During the night they pile wood high on their fire and sing their songs.

Wife Mani's\* dada (FF)  
Bring a bed with white bindings  
A bed for sitting upon  
Dada Pansa\* will not sit on the ground

Wife Mani's\* mother  
Get quilts from the quilt stand  
Quilts for sitting upon  
Mother Hathok\* will not sit upon the ground

etc. \* - names substituted

Songs such as these are sung to counter those of the ladi's womenfolk, who are bent on denigrating the zan.

In the ladi's village on the morning of the viva, the women go in procession to "salute" the banana trees at the village entrance, so that they can be brought into the village. In doing this they sang a song sung on several occasions throughout the night of the viva.

On the village gate sits a sparrow  
Oh speak! If you wish to speak  
In the house of our sister's father are a pair of oxen  
Give them to dear Ganga's hahara (HF)  
Father (hahara), if you must take, then take!  
I have spoken, so take!

While the mandua is being constructed by the young men, the womenfolk sit nearby on its north side and sing.

Sister's mandua is decorated  
Decorated with beautiful flowers  
Everybody is coming to her mandua  
But Father Lakshman\* is not coming  
Do not be bitter, Father Lakshman  
The coming zan will notice  
The coming zan will go away tomorrow  
And the shame will remain on you

\* - in subsequent verses FyB, B, and MB are substituted

Similar songs were sung, echoing the themes of bright decorations, and of the need for relatives to be party to the proceedings.

As has been mentioned, throughout the night of the viva the lada is visited by deputations from the ladi's party. These deputations are made up of the ladi's mother, womenfolk to sing, and young male relatives or

ZH. The following are the events that occurred throughout the night of Mali's viva.

The zan arrived early, and was accommodated in the uthak of the absent Rano Akhiyani. The menfolk were brought to the uthak of Arjan Adi'hra. Soon the more curious, or mischievous, among the younger relatives were sneaking over to "have a look at the lada and see what colour (how dark) he is", coming back to whisper in the ladi's ear. There was an hour or so to wait before dusk, at which point the ladi's party set out to deliver up the lagan.

Although ideally it falls on the ladi's mother to play a central part in these rites, this was not to be the case with Zakal, who was too distraught to contribute much to anything. Various household wives were brought in to substitute for her. Bapu, Lakshman's ZH, organised things for her, taking Lakshman's WBD to bear the lagan itself. Several young men accompanied this group, and womenfolk singing one of the lagan songs (see above) brought up the rear.

At the lada's uthak his mother stood waiting to salute the lagan with a winnow of dates, rice, and mauve dye for a tili. As was the custom, a box of sweetmeats was exchanged for it, and the ladi's party returned home, the young men attempting to steal the sweets from the ZH - one of them succeeded, much to the ZH's feigned annoyance.

About an hour later the procession reformed, this time to deliver the ma vanora on a brass plate. The women sang as follows.

The father's partition is tall  
Hush your crying, father\* of Ganga  
In the partition there is a window  
We see that Ganga is fairskinned  
But the other is dark

\* - FyB, B, MB substituted in subsequent verses

The food was received by the lada's aides, who transferred it to their own plates and returned the platter, thus enabling the procession to return.

Some time later the wheat pudding was delivered in the same way, although, as the night progressed and the cold increased, enthusiasm waned and the numbers diminished. (Much earlier the rest of the zan had been well feasted on wheat pudding, rice and lentil sauce.) The women delivering the pudding sang the "sparrow" song.

Of all the presentations made to the lada, that of the ghi was the most openly ribald in nature. The song sung was as follows.

Drink ghi lada, drink ghi!  
Has your mother left you?  
Drink ghi!  
Your stick will grow big  
Drink ghi!  
Your ball will be as the galola (throwing stone - weapon)  
Drink ghi!  
In my town of Nagar ghi is expensive



The song played on the notion that ghi is a source of virility, and that this is characteristic of the ladi's party.

After the giving of the ghi, there followed the presentation of the sab by the lada's party to his WM. The sab is the wedding jewelry - essentially silver halter, bracelets, and earrings, and gold nose-ring - and, a set of clothes - skirt, shawl, and length of material for a blouse. These things are to be worn at the actual phera ceremony. The lagan was returned along with these items.

The lada's womenfolk proceeded with one of his aides to the torani at the village entrance carrying these items, and waited for the ladi's womenfolk to come and collect them. Both parties had a song to sing.

Lada's Party :

Climb the torani

Bring the lagan\*

Brought back from the river

\* - clothes, bracelets, nosering substituted in subsequent verses

Ladi's Party :

Ganga's sab is coming

Come let us go and see!

What has been brought in the sab?

Come let us go and see!

A nose-ring has been brought in the sab

Come let us go and see!

A skirt has been brought in the sab

Come let us go and see! etc.

The aide bearing the sab was greeted by the ladi's mother, and the sab itself taken back to the house of the ladi where her womenfolk crowded around to examine its contents and quality. The lagan was placed under the ladi's pillow while the women set about measuring, cutting, and stitching up the cloth into a blouse to fit her. [3/2/82]

At last the appointed time of the phera draws near. The lada is made ready, his clothes rearranged, and his crown (moriya) tied to his white head cloth. Once more he is taken to the torani. There the full procession forms up, aides on either side, women behind under the cover of his green shawl held aloft. While they wait there for the ladi's party to escort them their women sing.

Brother\*, do not go through the vevai's gate  
Seeing you, your haro (WB) will cause mischief  
Laughing and joking he will marry you off

\* - FyB, MB, etc.

At this point in time the ladi is customarily brought by her aides to have a sneaked viewing of her husband.

DADI ZATI - When the lada is outside the toran waiting to come in for the phera, then the ladi takes a handful of dirt which she has kept from her piti, and some salt, and goes with her aides. When she is not too far off, but where the lada still cannot see her, she throws the handful so that it goes over the torani. Meanwhile the lada's accomplices have held up a shawl so that nothing strikes him. Then the ladi returns home and the lada is saluted by the women and enters the village.

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The ladi's party come to escort the lada carrying the bound clay hemispheres containing the salt and piti. Their women also sing.

I have been to and returned from my father's gate  
Father, I am fair-skinned  
But that person is dark  
Daughter, do not appraise him thus  
We have already given you to him

At the entrance the lada is saluted by his WM. His procession remains with him all the way to the mandua. The women may sing the following.

Zi! Zi! Zi! Ho!  
Place the diva high  
on the window ledge of the pavilion  
Where is the bed for my brother Babu  
Where have you been out to, my ladi?  
I have been out to see the lada

The lada's procession sit behind him at the mandua and sing while they wait for the ladi to be brought out.

A doll is bound in a shawl (i.e. the ladi in her wedding garments)  
In the mandua waits a strong peacock  
In the mandua waits a healthy peacock  
Enter within, oh ladi!  
Where is the land of the ladi's father?  
Tell us the name of his town!  
Vagar is our land  
Gadari is our town  
Enter within, oh ladi!  
What is the name of the father\*?  
Tell us his mother's\* name!

\* - FyB/FyBW, B/eBW, MB/MBW substituted

As the ladi and Lada circle the wedding fire, the two parties of womenfolk each sing their own separate song simultaneously.

Ladi's Party -

Where are the musicians?  
Everyone join in!  
Where is the pillar planted?  
Everyone join in!  
Who will play the drum?  
Everyone join in!  
Who will climb the pillar?  
Everyone join in!  
Mothi\* will play the drum  
Everyone join in!  
Zavo\* will climb the pillar  
Everyone join in!  
Dear Mali will cast the loincloth  
Everyone join in!  
Cast it beneath Zavo  
Everyone join in! ...

\* - Names of vevai are substituted

Lada's Party -

In the time of slumber of the coming dark half of the month  
I was asleep when a dream came  
Sita's lord, Rama did the phera  
With them was Lord Arjan  
The Brahman requested an offering, gold in colour  
The first\* circle within the pots was completed

\* second, third, fourth

While the sera is being detached from the lada's shoulders, the ladi's womenfolk start up a rude song. This causes much embarrassment among the more respectable, and amusement elsewhere.

Run, run, Father of the lada!  
Your lada is tied up  
Had we your money, the zan might be freed  
Otherwise it remains tied up in the mandua

In the morning preparations are made for the ritual departure. The lada and his party proceed to the mandua when the sun is beginning to take the chill off the winter day. He takes up position, sitting facing north at the north side of the mandua, his aides on either side, and his womenfolk behind. There they wait patiently while the women sing.

Don your sunari (shawl), oh ladi!  
That which is (red) like my fingernails  
Your father brought us, we have come  
Your mother thinks very highly of me

When the ladi has finally emerged and been attached once more to her lada, the Lada's mother greets the lada, and fills his pahli with grain. Then the whole procession sets off at a slow pace towards the village entrance: the lada and his aides under their green canopy followed by their womenfolk, followed by the ladi, her aides and womenfolk. Again there is a simultaneous singing of two songs.

Lada's Party

What is in Ba's (term of affection - WHM) pocket?  
Tell us please, great people!  
In Ba's pocket is four anna  
What is on wife's arms?  
Tell us please, great people!  
On wife's arms are bracelets , etc...

Ladi's Party

The sister's father's old mango tree  
She would play in the mango tree's shade  
Sister's wings have now carried her away  
Now she leaves her father Lakshman's kingdom  
She goes to that of her hahara (HF)

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